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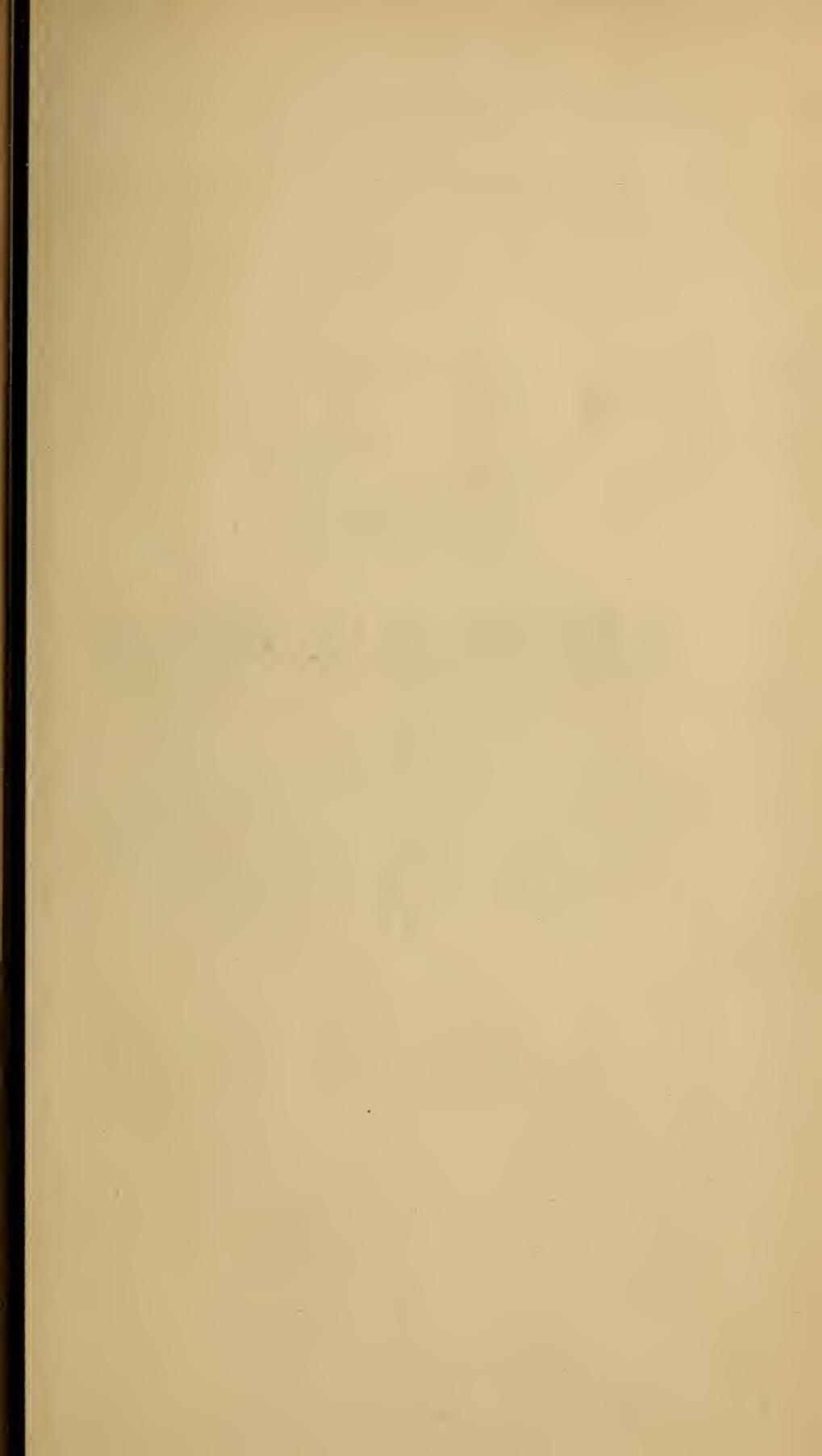
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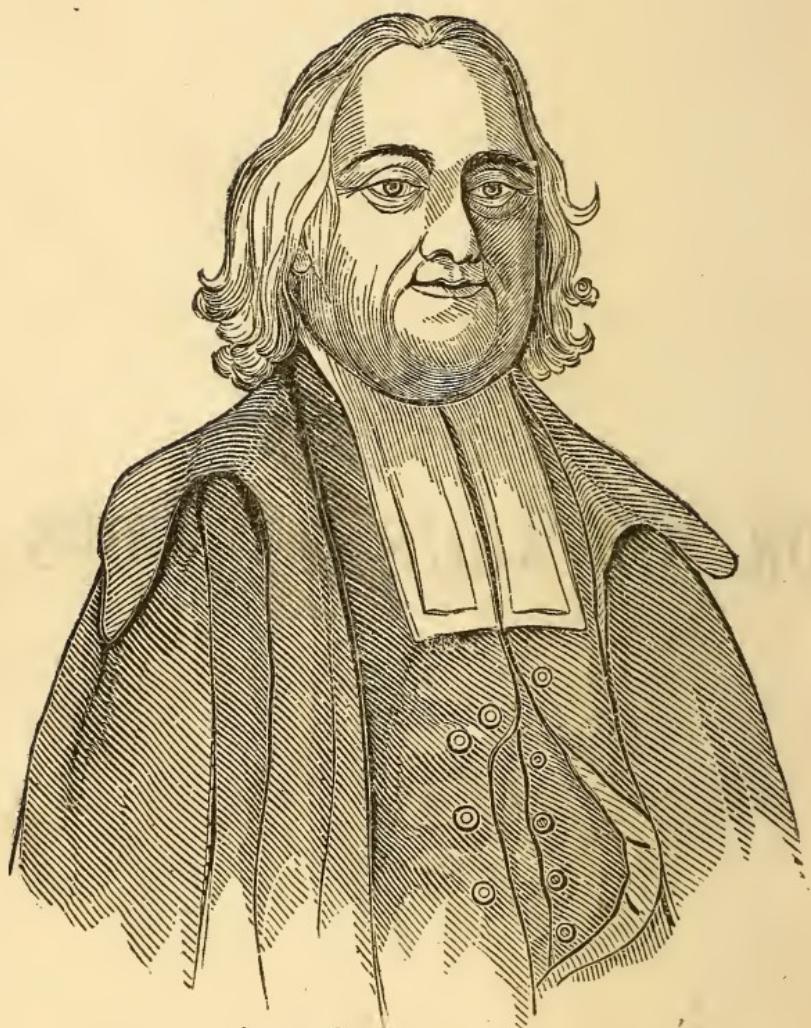
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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No. 194



DR. SEWALL'S LECTURES.



Joseph Sawall.

THE
HOLY SPIRIT

CONVINCING THE WORLD

OF SIN, OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND
OF JUDGMENT:

CONSIDERED IN FOUR LECTURES; THE TWO FORMER DELIVERED AT
THE TUESDAY EVENING LECTURE IN BRATTLE STREET, JAN.
20, AND MARCH 3; THE OTHER TWO AT THE OLD SOUTH
CHURCH, IN BOSTON, APRIL 17 AND 26, 1741.

By Joseph Sewall, D. D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY REV. R. K. SEWALL.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

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INTRODUCTION.

On introducing to the public a new and *unaltered* edition of this little but important work, many considerations present themselves. The relation of the subject of the work to man's spiritual welfare, is one. But there are others connected with the history of the work itself, and the progress of evangelical sentiments, which ought not to be overlooked. The reputation of the dead is involved, as well as the interests of the living. Truth and righteousness—the faith and memory of our ancestors—are also concerned.

These lectures were preached during one of the most extensive and interesting revivals ever witnessed in this country. It is known as the “great awakening.” It began about A. D. 1734,* under the preaching of Edwards, Whitefield and Tennent, and continued nine or ten years.

* Great Awakening, p. 1.

In consequence of this religious interest, a Tuesday evening lecture was established in Boston, of which Dr. Sewall in his private journal speaks thus:

"Oct. 21st. An evening lecture was begun at Dr. Colman's. He preached from Isa. 60: 8; great assembly. 28th. I preached from Ezek. 11: 19, 20; another great assembly. I hope God helped me under my infirmities. It is said many were affected. O Lord, touch the hearts of thy people—put a new heart in them. O let not our sinfulness hinder the success of thy word! The Thursday lecture seems to be better attended."

"Jan. 20, A. D. 1740-1, I preached the evening lecture from John 16: 8. 'Reprove the world of sin, &c.' There were notes for about fifty-four (54) under conviction of sin, sensual hard heart, temptations Satan; besides, several young children concerned for their souls. I hope God helped me. Lord, I thank thee. Revive thy work more and more."*

Their author, Rev. Joseph Sewall, D. D., was born in Boston, August 15th, 1688. His father was the Hon. Samuel Sewall, descended from a long line of noble ancestors. He graduated at Harvard College in 1707; and continued his residence in Cambridge to study divinity. From his earliest days, Dr. Sewall was the subject of religious impressions. While but a youth, there was such an uncommon seriousness and strict regularity in his whole walk, as to attract the notice of all his acquaintance, and command the respect of his superiors in age. His baptism is thus noticed in his father's journal :

* Dr. Sewall's Journal.

"Aug. 19, 1688. In the afternoon, Mr. Willard, after sermon, baptized my young son; whom I named Joseph, in hopes of the accomplishment of the prophecy, Ezek. 37, and such like,—and not out of respect to any relation, or other person, except the first Joseph."

In 1706, while yet an under-graduate, he united himself with the church at Cambridge; and about the same time, he became a member of a society there formed for the first time, among the students of College, which met weekly for prayer, religious conference, and the promotion of personal piety and virtue. At nineteen years of age he began a private journal, in which he constantly refers to God as the author of his life, the dispenser of good and evil, and the wise disposer of himself and all the events and circumstances of his life. His mind was deeply imbued with religious sentiment; though we cannot discover the precise time of his conversion. But his life, views, and religious character, afford abundant proof of such a change.

Says a late writer, "His disposition was naturally mild and affectionate, and began to be sanctified in early childhood; and evidences are preserved of his diligent and faithful use of the means of promoting growth in grace from early youth."* The testimony concerning him, transmitted to us from the most authentic sources, is, that, through life, "his chief glory was the love of God and zeal to do good."

* Wisner's History of O. S. Church.

He was early devoted to the service of the sanctuary by his venerable father; and to it he freely devoted himself. Divinity was his favorite study. Its themes were suited to his taste, because they led him to form a more intimate acquaintance with God, and tended to improve his piety.

August 20th, 1710, he preached his first sermon, in the Old South Church, Boston, in the presence of his father and its Pastor, Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton, from Psalm 73: 28, “But it is good for me to draw near unto God.” It was received with favor; and from that time, the people seem to have had him in their minds as their minister. In April, 1712, their wishes were made known, in the choice of him by the church, as colleague Pastor with Mr. Pemberton. He was not settled immediately, nor did he return at once his answer. He first sought divine direction, and often asked of God the way of duty—appropriating special seasons for this purpose by himself, and once at least in union with his pious father. Having maturely considered the question of his settlement over this church, and sought divine guidance, he gave his consent to become colleague Pastor, and was publicly and solemnly separated to the work of the ministry by fasting, prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, September 16, 1713. A description of his ordination is given below, as an example of the custom of Congregationalism, in these early times.

Dr. Sewall’s ordination is thus described in his father’s journal. “1713, Sept. 16, was a very com-

fortable day for the ordination. Begun a little after ten, M. Dr. Cotton Mather begun with prayer, excellently ; concluded about the bell-ringing for eleven. My son preached from 1 Cor. 3: 7, " So then neither is he that planteth any thing," &c. Was a very great assembly. Were elders and messengers from nine churches, North, Old, Colman's, Cambridge, Charlestown, Roxbury, Dorchester, Milton, Weymouth. Twelve ministers sat by the table at the pulpit. Mr. Pemberton made an august speech, showing the validity and authenticity of New English ordinations. Then, having made his way, went on ; asked, as customary, if any had to say aught against ordaining the person. Took the church's hand vote ; church sat in the gallery. These declared, the elders and messengers had desired the ministers of Boston to lay on hands. Dr. Increase Mather, Dr. Cotton Mather, Mr. Benjamin Wardsworth, Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton, and Mr. Benjamin Colman, laid on hands. Then Mr. Pemberton prayed, ordained, and gave the charge, excellently. Then Dr. Increase Mather made a notable speech, gave the right hand of fellowship, and prayed. Mr. Pemberton directed the three and twentieth psalm to be sung. The person now ordained dismissed the congregation with blessing."

For more than half a century, he continued to fill the office and discharge the duties of a Pastor, in the Old South Church, Boston. " In humble, ardent and consistent piety, and devotedness to the work of the ministry, he has seldom been equalled," says Rev. Dr. Wisner. He delighted in it ; and when he grew

venerable for his age as well as his piety, he was regarded as the father of the clergy. His pulpit discourses were chiefly devoted to the illustration of the distinguishing and important points of Christianity, relative both to faith and practice. They were the result of study,—the composition discovering not only judgment, but an intimate acquaintance with the holy Scriptures. His sermons, of which many were published and are preserved, were always instructive and practical. His preaching was solid and scriptural—practical and pathetic. He dwelt much on the great doctrines of religion, but never entered into any curious speculations. His aim was, to impress upon people what they should believe, and how they must live, to be eternally happy. He had a clear apprehension of the truths of religion. He did not entertain his hearers with the subtleties of the schools. He furnished to his people sound doctrine, derived from the treasury of the gospel,—administered reproof, and gave them instruction in righteousness. Dr. Sewall was distinguished among his brethren in the ministry for his wisdom: not the wisdom of this world, but for that which is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. “I know of no man,” said Dr. Chauncy of him, “that discovered more prudent caution through his whole life.”

His style was simple and plain. His delivery was serious and solemn. “Sometimes he uttered himself with a voice so elevated with zeal, and modulated

under the influence of a deeply affected heart," as to arrest attention and deeply impress his auditory with a sense of the importance of the message he delivered. He stood before his people and addressed them as a man of God.

"He conveyed his sentiments to the minds of others," says a cotemporary,* "in easy, chaste language, and delivered himself with such commanding elocution, as almost necessarily engaged the attention of the assembly, and greatly tended to impress their minds and reach their hearts. The great secret of his peculiar art, was a deep sense of the vital importance of the truth he dispensed, which, setting his own heart on fire, animated his discourses with the same divine emotion he felt himself." His prayers were remarkably devout and fervent. He seemed to breathe the atmosphere of heaven.†

He discharged the other duties of his sacred office with prudence and fidelity, diligence and impartiality, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, not only publicly, but from house to house, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. His very presence banished levity, and produced solemnity of mind in all who were with him. "He was distinguished for affectionate attention to children and youth; and eminently happy and useful in his pastoral visits."

His labors were not in vain in the Lord. Between seven and eight hundred were received to his church during his ministry, principally the fruit of his labor.

* Dr. Chauncy. † Wisner's History O. S. Church.

"In principle, Dr. Sewall was a Calvinist; and made the doctrines, usually called the doctrines of grace, the foundation and chief subject of his preaching. But he stood aloof from the doubtful and dangerous extremes to which some have carried their reasoning upon these doctrines."*

Prayer was his delight; as the following extracts from his journal evince: 1729. "I arose early in the morning, prayed once and again for my honored father—the college—our family—my kinswoman entering upon the married state," etc. "O Lord, hear and give an answer for thy Son's sake." Jan. 5, 1721. "Mr. Prince and I prayed together as is usual before the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.—Lord, hear our prayers!" 1722, Nov. 2. "Mr. Prince and I met together and prayed to God for direction and assistance relating to the *fast* to be kept by the church we stand related to." 1728, Jan. 13. "The church being to meet relating to the affairs of the new building, Mr. Prince and I prayed together.—O Lord, hear; guide and govern our affairs in mercy."†

"A portion of Friday afternoon before every communion, and a season preceding the transaction of any important business in the church, was habitually spent in this manner by these faithful servants of Christ; and, occasionally, they spent portions of a

* Extract from Boston Evening Post, containing biographical notice, 1769.

† Wisner's History O. S. Church.

day mutually devoted to private humiliation, in united prayer."

He accompanied his prayers with alms. It was a fixed principle with him to devote a tenth of his income to God, in pious and charitable uses.

"Having inherited a considerable fortune," says Dr. Wisner, "he, for many years in succession, made a liberal donation to the College (Harvard), to be appropriated to pious indigent students; when the College Library was consumed by fire, he made a present of many valuable books. He also gave liberally to the poor and other charitable objects."

He was both a husband and a parent. October 29, 1713, he was married to Miss Elizabeth Walley, who died before her husband. Only one son survived him, whose name was Samuel. His learned cotemporary, Dr. Chauncy, says of him, "The Father of spirits was pleased to furnish him with valuable intellectual powers. These, by the advantages of a good education, were highly cultivated and improved." It is further said of him, "that his solidity and exactness of judgment, even in cases of difficulty, and a distinguishing prudence both in public and private life, made him justly esteemed as one of the wisest men of his day." "His whole deportment was a proof of the truth of religion." He came as near to the apostolic requirement—that the Christian be a "living epistle, read and known of all men"—as any other man. He was of a quiet and peaceable disposition. "He could sacrifice every thing, but duty, for peace;" and

esteemed nothing too dear, “but truth and holiness, for the purchase of it.”

“Dr. Sewall was a warm friend of literature ;” his excellence as a man, his professional ability and classical attainments were appreciated both in this country and Europe. On the death of President Leverett, 1724, his eminent qualifications for the office recommended him to the elective powers of Harvard College, as a suitable candidate for the honors and duties of that distinguished position. He was accordingly chosen to succeed Mr. Leverett. When he received intelligence of his election—which, in his own words, “was surprising to him”—he thus notices it in his journal, “O Lord, what am I, a sinful worm, that there should be any thought of me for so considerable a trust !” “I besought the Lord to give all needed direction to the overseers, the flock I stand related to, and to myself. I also endeavored to examine myself; and if I know my own heart, my inclination is to abide with my dear people, and spend and be spent in the work of the ministry here, if this be the will of God and most to his glory. I think I can truly say that no prospect of greater worldly honor or gain would prevail with me to leave this people; and that I do not account my life too dear to be spent in the service of Christ among them.”

This feeling of attachment to his people was mutual. His charge refused to part with him. Upon the action of the church in reference to his dismissal to a more conspicuous, responsible and eligible field of labor, having sought divine light and guidance, he

writes as follows : “ I suppose that now God makes my way plain to give an answer in the negative (to the call of the College), which I accordingly did. Lord, provide a more suitable and sufficient person for that important trust.”

In 1728, Dr. Sewall was chosen a member of the corporation of Harvard College ; and in 1731 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, from the University of Glasgow.*

Dr. Sewall had great veneration for our pious and excellent forefathers. He could not calmly hear them reproached or vilified. He thought their self-denying virtue and magnanimity, which led them to encounter such multiplied dangers in preserving the rights of conscience ; and their wisdom and piety, which enabled them to lay the foundations of our civil and religious prosperity—ought more than counterbalance any little mistake they might have committed. He was alarmed at any effort for the establishment of a hierarchy in the colonies. Nor was he less solicitous when any attempt was made to deprive the people of their civil rights and liberties.

In fine, as a man, Dr. Chauncy remarks of him,—“ It is hard to say what virtues were most eminent in him, he set such a shining example of all.” This is the testimony of a cotemporary—an eye-witness—a fellow-laborer and townsman—who preached his funeral sermon, from Heb. 12:6, “ Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the

* MS. copy Rev. S. Sewall.

promises." After illustrating and enforcing the obvious sentiment of the apostle, he concludes by saying—the occasion of this discourse is the death of Dr. Sewall, " who was justly held in high reputation throughout the town and land, for those excellent qualities in which he shone with exemplary brightness, both as a Christian and a minister, from youth to protracted old age."

The Lord long continued the usefulness of Dr. Sewall. Few ministers ever prosecuted with less interruption the labors of their profession; and few were ever blessed with more vigorous and unbroken health. On the evening of the eightieth year of his age, he preached to a serious and affected auditory, and in this public manner, recounted with humble and thankful gratitude, the sparing mercy of God. "He had for some time, on account of his infirmities, been carried into the pulpit (in an arm chair, by the sexton and another individual), from Sabbath to Sabbath; where, like the beloved disciple of old in his latter days, he sat, and with paternal and apostolic affection and fidelity, instructed and exhorted his children in the faith. The Sabbath following his 80th year, he was prostrated by an attack of paralysis, which put an end to his public labors and confined him to his house. But he was still engaged in his Master's service. As opportunity occurred, he gave pious counsel and instruction to many who visited him; which, it is believed, was of lasting benefit. By repeated attacks upon his naturally firm, but now breaking constitution, occasion was given for exem-

plary exercise of faith and patience, and those other virtues which adorned his character as a Christian and a minister. Death was disarmed of his sting. He waited the approach of the king of terrors "with a peaceful and resigned frame of mind." As he was visited by great numbers, who were desirous of hearing the last words of the ascending prophet, so he was incessant in his counsels and prayers. With solemn and engaging pathos, he was wont to say—"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." To those who were disposed to eulogize his labors, and commend him for his service, and point him to his works as a ground of confidence that he should be accepted with his Maker, he expressed his sense of his defects—acknowledged himself to be an unprofitable servant—bewailed the remains of indwelling sin—and assured them that he looked to Jesus Christ for pardon, and confided in his atoning sacrifice for acceptance with God. His great fear was, lest he might not wait with due Christian submission till his change should come. He had glimpses of unseen and eternal things, and spoke of them with great interest. He enjoyed sweet foretastes of heaven—such foretastes as if his soul was on the wing in the heavenly atmosphere. He undoubtedly stood, where Payson stood, in prospect of the land of Beulah, and heard the sweet music and felt the refreshing breezes of that heavenly clime, ere his foot pressed its soil, or his soul basked in its uncreated glory. He beheld the distant, but "wonderful, wonderful, wonderful glory," upon which the dying Evarts gazed with rapture. Like "a mote

floating in the sun-beams," his soul swam in the dawning light of heaven, as did the spirit of the dying Walton, when it mounted to meet its God.

To the last, he seemed to have the full exercise of reason, and calmly and serenely sunk into that sleep from which the body shall know no waking, till the trumpet shall sound, and "all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Thus, "the venerable and excellent Sewall entered into his rest," 26th of June, 1769, having attained nearly the eighty-first year of his life.

RUFUS K. SEWALL.

BOSTON, DEC., 1845.

P R E F A C E .

It hath pleased the sovereign and gracious God, in whose hand our times are, to ordain that we should live under some peculiar advantages for our precious souls ; for to the ordinary means, we have superadded the manifestation of the Spirit, in extraordinary works of grace. We have lately heard glad tidings from one place and another, that many are inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward; and some are declaring what God hath done for their souls. Yea, God hath brought this work home to our own doors, and we hear many crying out, What must we do to be saved? And there are a number hopefully rejoicing in God's salvation. Of such a season as this it may well be said, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the ac

cepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. I hope God's people are reaping the fruit of their prayers, particularly on extraordinary days of fasting observed with an especial view to this great blessing, the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit. And shall we not prize and improve this rich gift? Shall we not redeem this precious time in working out our own salvation? considering that God who alone can work in us to will and to do, says to us, Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Certainly we must be very criminal if we sleep or loiter away such a day of grace. They who are guilty of such a presumptuous sin, run a dreadful hazard of swift destruction, double damnation. O there's great reason to fear that another like season will never, never return upon you. O sleeper! awake, and hearken, there's a noise, and a shaking among the dry bones. Some it may be of your own acquaintance, secure like you a little while ago, are now in deep concern, and can no longer relish those carnal pleasures in which you were companions. Now, destruction from God is a terror to them, and they are fleeing from the wrath to come. What a reproof doth God

give to your stupidity in the awakenings of others? Now then hear God's voice, Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you. Or, if ye are still deaf to God's calls, let the thunder of those amazing words make your ears to tingle; Because I have called, and ye have refused,—I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind. And tremble lest you should be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy. But then, let awakened sinners be encouraged to press into the kingdom of heaven. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Improve the five talents now put into your hands, remembering what our Lord hath said, Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required. O look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God! Continue seeking till Christ be revealed to you as the Lord your righteousness, and as the God of judgment: that you may glory in this, that you understand and know the Lord, who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. And here, among you with whom the Spirit is striving at this day, we behold many of our young people. O

our children! God is drawing nigh to you in a distinguishing manner, and will not you from this time cry unto him, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? Shall any of you be profane as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right; and then, when he would have inherited the blessing, was rejected? God forbid. May you all thirst for God, and seek him early, till that promise shall be more abundantly fulfilled in you—I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring. And is it possible for parents and elder persons to behold these things, and not be moved? Can you see your children in pain, and travailing till Christ be formed in them, and you be unconcerned about the new birth? Are they taken, and can you bear to be left behind; left to perish in your sins, as far distant as heaven and hell? Is the eleventh hour running, and you not effectually called? What a sad token is this! The Lord have mercy upon you!

But there are considerable numbers of elder as well as younger persons, of whom I am persuaded better things, and things that accompany salvation. And to you our ascended Saviour speaks, Hold fast till I come. Be not ashamed or afraid to confess Christ before

men, and to stand up for him. And here the providence of God gives me advantage to press upon you that exhortation—If ye are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above; set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For as it was with God's ancient people, a day of darkness and gloominess, and then God comforted his people with that gracious promise—I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*, so it pleaseth God to send down the Comforter from heaven into the hearts of his people, while it is a dark day with us upon temporal accounts. May the Spirit of judgment sanctify the frowns of God upon us to rebuke our pride, our covetousness, our luxury; and all those foolish and hurtful lusts, whereby we have been conformed to this world. And now we behold the curse devouring the earth, may we all unite in seeking the blessings of the heavenly paradise, where Satan and the curse can never enter. That we may even now say with the prophet,— Although the fig-tree shall not blossom—and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

* Joel 2.

But I forbear, and would only further say, that the remarkable work of grace begun and going on among us, gave encouragement to me to study and preach the following sermons. At first, I designed to publish only upon the head of Conviction of Sin, the discourses upon which subject it pleased God to own and bless much beyond my expectation. May the praise be given to that God who hath chosen the weak things of the world, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Since that, I have been prevailed upon to go on with the subject, and also to publish the other discourses; that we may see in some measure how the Spirit of God carrieth on his good work in the hearts of his people from legal conviction to saving conversion, and then sends forth judgment to victory, notwithstanding all opposition from the enemies of our salvation. Sensible of the defects which attend this performance, I humbly commend it to God for his blessing, beseeching him to teach us to profit by all the means of grace which he gives us richly to enjoy.

JOSEPH SEWALL.

BOSTON, APRIL, 1741.

LECTURE I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVINCETH OF SIN.

JOHN 16: 8.

And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin,
and of righteousness, and of judgment.

In my last turn at this lecture, I considered our Lord Jesus Christ as exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins; from Acts 5: 31. I now proceed to show you the great and comprehensive gift which our Lord received of the Father, when he ascended on high, the gift of the Holy Spirit, by whom he works faith and repentance in the hearts of his people, and so prepareth them for all the blessings of the gospel. And here our Lord assureth us that his disciples, and so

his churches would be great gainers by his withdraw from them on earth, to his exalted state in heaven ; for then, and not till then, should the Spirit be given in a more plentiful and extensive manner, in virtue of Christ's intercession at the Father's right hand ; and that to make application of the redemption purchased by him, and to communicate all spiritual blessings to his people, v. 7. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Accordingly we also read, that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. And we have the fulfilment of our Saviour's promise, Acts 2: 4. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, in miraculous gifts, particularly the gift of tongues, whereby the apostles were qualified to preach the gospel to other nations. And the Spirit of God was also poured out in an extraordinary manner as a spirit of grace and consolation, vs. 41, 42. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized ; and

the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. But I return to the text, in which we have the errand on which the Holy Ghost is sent, and the work he should perform in virtue of his mission, described. For though the three persons in the adorable trinity are one in the essential perfections of the divine nature, yet in the covenant of redemption, the Son voluntarily agreeth to fulfil the Father's will by taking our nature in the fullness of time, and purchasing eternal salvation for his people ; and the Holy Spirit engageth that the saving benefits of this redemption shall be applied to all whom the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Agreeably it is here said, And when he is come, he will reprove, etc. When he is come, i. e., in the peculiar manifestations of his gracious presence ; for in his divine essence, the Spirit is immense

and omnipresent. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Ps. 139: 7. He will reprove the word of sin,—not only Jews but Gentiles. Possibly some may be stumbled that the Spirit is called the Comforter, and then it is said that he should reprove. But now, the word is of larger signification, it signifieth advocate, and is thus translated by Beza. We have the same word applied to Christ, 1 John 2: 1. And accordingly, the Spirit is called another Comforter or Advocate, John 14: 16. When our Lord ascended to appear in the presence of God for his people, and transact their affairs in the court of heaven as their advocate with the Father, he sent his Holy Spirit to manage the affairs of the kingdom of grace here upon earth. And this work of convincing men of sin well suits with this character of an advocate. As such the Spirit of God shows sinners that the charge laid against them in God's word is just, that the world may become guilty before God; and that sinners, self-condemned, may seek justification by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and so be prepared for the joy of God's salvation. And this agreeth also with

the word here translated, reprove, which signifieth to convince by evident arguments and solid reason. "I will convince them of their sins, and after reprove, admonish and check them for the same." And there is then a particular sin mentioned, v. 9, Of sin because they believe not in me. The heinous sin of the Jews in that day was, that they rejected Jesus Christ the Messiah promised to their fathers, and sent to them as the only name whereby they could be saved. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1: 11. Saving a remnant according to the election of grace. Because of unbelief, they were broken off. Rom. 11: 20. Accordingly when the Spirit of God was poured out, and Peter preached to them, Acts 2, he charged them home with the great sin of rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory ; upon which many are pricked to the heart, and say in deep concern, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? v. 37. And doth not this sin of unbelief much prevail in this age ? Many seem to be insensible how great the evil of this sin is, though the word

of God declareth, that, he who believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 1 John 5 : 10. It is to be feared that there are many under the gospel, who satisfy themselves with an outward attendance on religious duties, while they refuse to submit to Christ, and neglect his great salvation. But now, when the Spirit of God convinceth men of sin, he will show them the great evil of an heart of unbelief, and make them sensible of this, that he who believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Again, The Spirit reproveth of righteousness. He will convince men that Jesus who suffered an accursed death as if he had been the vilest malefactor, being crucified between two thieves, is indeed the just one ; and suffered the just for the unjust, that he is the Lord our righteousness. He will convince sinners that they cannot be justified but by the righteousness of Christ received by faith. Now his going to the Father was a demonstration of this, that he was Jesus Christ the righteous, and had fulfilled all righteousness.—And of

judgment. That all judgment is committed to the Son as Lord and Christ, and that he hath power, as Mediator and in virtue of his obedience unto death, to cast down Satan from his usurped throne, and deliver poor sinners from his destroying power. Agreeably where our Saviour speaks of his being lifted up upon the cross, he says, Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. John 12: 31.

Having thus explained the words of my text, I return to consider that part which I purpose more particularly to speak to; the work of the Spirit in reproving men of sin.

DOCTRINE.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince and reprove men of sin.

The Spirit of God is the great dispenser of common and saving grace. There is a saving conviction of sin, which the Spirit of God works in the hearts of men when he enlightens them to discern spiritual things after a spiritual manner. When God gives them the light of the knowledge of his glory,

they see that evil in sin as it is contrary to him, his nature and revealed will, which causes them to mourn for it with that godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation. Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42: 5, 6. They look unto Jesus as pierced by their sins and mourn. Zech. 12: 10. Thus it is when the Spirit of grace converts men, and turns them from sin to God, by working a saving change in their hearts. And there is a legal conviction which the Spirit of God works in the hearts of men before conversion, whereby they are awakened out of their carnal security in sin, and brought under deep concern about deliverance from it as a destroying evil. Now it is a matter of the greatest importance to such as are under this work that it be carried on till it issue in a saving conversion to God. For the divine Spirit, who acts with sovereign liberty, may be provoked to depart, and leave men to perish in their sins. Thus the Spirit of God strove with the sinners of the old world, whose departed spirits are

called spirits in prison. 1 Pet. 3: 19. Their bodies were destroyed by the flood, and their souls are now shut up in hell, where they are kept in durance to the judgment of the great day. And indeed it is plain from Scripture that these lower workings of the Spirit, if I may so call them, have been in some preparatory to saving conversion, while others have stifled them. I shall give you an instance of each from the word of God, to awaken your hopes and fears, the great springs of human endeavors. The rough and hardy jailer came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They answer, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And it seems the Spirit soon converted him, even that same night; yea, gave him the joy of God's salvation. He rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house. Acts 16: 29—34. O, that this may be the happy case of the many now under convictions! Felix also trembled, as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Acts 24: 25. Behold the judge quaking for fear before his prisoner! We may well suppose a greater

than Paul was there, even the Judge of all the earth, reprobating this man for the crimes by the Spirit accompanying Paul's faithful ministry ; but then he unhappily endeavored to put off his convictions by saying to Paul, Go thy way for this time ; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. And for aught any thing that appears, the Spirit ceased striving with him. We read indeed that Felix sent for Paul again ; but not to hear the word of God, and inquire how he should improve his convictions ; but because he hoped that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him, v. 26. A base thing indeed ! And after two years, to show the Jews a pleasure, he left Paul bound, v. 27. Upon the whole, it is highly probable, that the convenient season he pretended to wait for, never came. O it is a dangerous thing to resist the Spirit of God striving with us, and as it were bid him depart from us !

I would now speak particularly to the doctrine under these following heads ;

I. The Holy Spirit is the author of the work of conviction.

II. We may consider the means he useth to convince men of sin.

III. Offer some description of this work of conviction.

I. The Holy Spirit is the author of this work of conviction.

That there is such a work going before and preparatory to saving conversion in God's chosen people, is evident from Scripture and experience. The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost ; and the prodigal son is represented as sensible of his perishing condition, before he resolveth to arise and go to his father. Luke 15: 17, 18. And our compassionate Redeemer inviteth them that labor and are heavy laden to come to him for rest. Matt. 11: 28. And we find from examples upon record in Scripture, as well as of later date down to our own times, that God takes this course with men, convincing them of sin and bringing them under a deep concern about their souls before he grants them the joy of his salvation. Now

whatever instruments may be used in this work, we must acknowledge that the Spirit of God is the great efficient. He striveth with men. Gen. 6: 3. And accordingly Stephen charged his hearers with the great sin of resisting the Holy Ghost. Acts 7: 51. How sharp were his arrows in their hearts who heard Peter's sermon upon occasion of the wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost in the day of Pentecost. Acts 2. They were pricked in their heart, v. 37, and in a little time seem to have been subdued to the obedience of faith. Agreeably, the Spirit of God is called a spirit of bondage. Rom. 8: 15. Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. Indeed the Holy Spirit cannot be the author of sin whereby men are brought into bondage ; but then he makes sinners sensible of this cruel bondage, and brings them to groan after deliverance.

II. We proceed to consider the means which the Spirit of God useth to convince men of sin.

1. The great instrument is the word of God.

And accordingly the word is called the sword of the Spirit. Eph. 6: 17. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction. 2 Tim. 3: 16. But then the same Spirit that moved those holy men who wrote the Scriptures, must accompany them with his divine influence; or there will be sad occasion to take up that lamentation, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. 53: 1. When the Spirit is withdrawn, we find that the ministry of the word has little or no good effect upon the hearts of sinners. They are unmoved as the seats they sit upon; Their ears are heavy and their eyes shut, Isa. 6: 10. But when this Almighty Spirit is pleased to take his word into his own hand, and wound the sinner's conscience with it, he can no longer make light of the commands or threatenings; they come home to him, and reach his very heart; he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; he is convinced of the sins whereby he hath transgressed God's holy law, and his heart con-

demneth him for them. Now the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4: 12. The law of God is called a fiery law. Deut. 33: 2. And it may well be so called, not only as it was delivered out of the midst of the fire, from the burning mountain ; but also, as in it we have God's burning wrath, and fiery indignation against sinners revealed from heaven. Accordingly when the word of God is accompanied with the Spirit, and so comes with power upon the hearts of sinners, they feel pain and anguish, and are sensible of the deadly wounds sin hath given them. Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord ; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ? Jer. 23: 29. When the Spirit takes it into his hand, he breaks the sinner's carnal confidences. By the law is the knowledge of sin, and by it the Spirit reproves men for their sins, and convinceth them of their lost perishing condition as transgressors of God's law. So sharp

and cutting were God's reproofs of his ancient people by his word in the mouth of his holy prophets, that he says, Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth. Hos. 6: 5.

2. The Holy Spirit convinceth and reproveth men of sin by God's providential dispensations, particularly by afflictive providences.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit makes use of the divine goodness to lead sinners to repentance. Rom. 2: 4. And draweth them as with the cords of a man, and bands of love. Agreeably it is promised that the children of Israel should fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days. Hos. 3: 5. But I am now considering the reproof given by afflictions. When sinners resist the Spirit speaking to them in and by his word, he sometimes takes the rod, and teacheth them as Gideon taught the men of Succoth with briers and thorns of the wilderness. And when they are thus torn and wounded, they are brought to consider what an evil thing sin is, and their need of a Saviour to deliver them from

it. Thus God said to his ancient people by the prophet Jeremiah, Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts, chap. 2: 9. Outward prosperity is apt to make men careless and secure; to say with the church of the Laodiceans, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. But now, when God brings men into straits and under difficulties, he sometimes awaketh them to a serious reflection upon their spiritual poverty, misery and wretchedness. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear; this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice. The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity. Surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for thy wickedness. Jer. 22: 21, 22. And thus it was with Ephraim when he bore the reproach of the sins of his youth under God's chastisements.

Jer. 31: 18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Though these words nextly refer to God's people, they may be fitly applied to particular persons. When God corrects men, and by his Spirit opens their ears to discipline, he shows them the necessity of their turning to God, and maketh them concerned to obtain converting grace. Turn thou me! O, that this may be the happy case of many young people who are under convictions at this time! Dear children! Ask the Spirit of grace as a spirit of regeneration and adoption, that you may have your weary souls revived with that good word which followeth, v. 20, Is Ephraim a dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. But to return. When persons are secure, God cometh upon them, takes away their health,

and brings them seriously to consider their latter end. God shaketh me over the grave, says the awakened sinner, and what will become of me, if I die in my sins, if I die out of Christ? Again, God comes and taketh away their earthly goods, and so convinceth them of the evil of trusting in uncertain riches, and awakens them to seek that good part which cannot be taken away. Again, God bereaveth men of their near and dear friends, and so quickens them to seek the favor and friendship of the eternal God, making them taste the bitterness of sin as it hath brought death into the world, and showing them the vanity of creatures. We read of those sinners, Ps. 78: 34, 35. When he slew them, they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God. And was it not thus with this people in the time of the earthquake, when God threatened to send us down quick into the pit? Did not multitudes tremble as the jailer, and inquire with great concern, What must we do to be saved? How did people flock to God's house, and with what awe did they attend to

his word while the foundations of the earth were shaken under us ? Yea, I humbly apprehend that there is reason to believe that the mighty voice uttered from the deep places of the earth, together with the still voice of God's word, was sanctified not only for the conviction, but also for the conversion of numbers of people, by the Spirit of God. So far as we can judge, there were a number, whom the terrors of that dreadful night awakened, whom the Spirit effectually called ; while it is to be feared that the impressions made on a far greater number wore off, and died away. I the rather mention this remarkable providence, because I apprehend that the time of it was a season in which God was pleased in a general and extraordinary manner to strive with this people. Since that we have been visited with a very mortal sickness, in which God hath cut off many of our children ; but I cannot learn that people have been awakened in any proportion to the exceeding awfulness of the judgment.

3. The Holy Spirit makes use of his works of grace to convince and awaken sinners.

At sometimes the Spirit is awfully restrained, and then conversions are rare and doubtful. At other seasons, God is pleased to pour out his Spirit upon his people, and then his works of grace are as the light which goeth forth. Many ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, and not a few declare God's works of grace towards them with rejoicing. Convictions and conversions become more frequent and apparent, so far as our judgment reacheth. It is true, the saving conversion of others cannot be certainly known by us in the ordinary way, because we are not able to look directly into the heart, but must judge by outward appearances. And therefore we ought to exercise judgment with charity. But then there are sometimes fruits of the Spirit so evident, that they cannot be concealed or denied. There is the manifestation of the Spirit in his divine operations. 1 Cor. 12: 7. Persons that were before quiet in their sins and unconcerned, are so awakened that they cannot stifle their convictions, nor conceal their distress ; but are made to cry out, What shall we do ? how shall we escape

the wrath to come? And when a son or a daughter, or any other in a family are thus wrought upon, the house is alarmed with it, and thus their friends and acquaintances are happily impressed with concern about their own souls by the convictions of others, when the Spirit of God is pleased to use them as means for this end. And when such a work of grace spreads and increaseth through the good hand of God upon his people, it will be still more observable, and such as are considerate, will be ready to say, admiring, What hath God wrought! Yea, all that behold it must now see, if they will open their eyes, that there is more in religion than a lifeless formality, and outward attendance on ordinances. When the work of God is thus revived among a people, the form of godliness will be animated with the inward life and power of it. God's own children will be quickened to arise and trim their lamps, that their light may shine before others. And such as were strangers to religion before, will now press into the kingdom of heaven. That description well agreeth to such a season,

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11: 12. The ministers of Christ will be encouraged and enlightened in their work, and such as are under convictions will be awakened to a more diligent attendance on the word and ordinances. Now such things as these, under the influence of the blessed Spirit, must have a happy tendency to rouse the sleepy secure sinner, and reprove him for his criminal indifference in the great concerns of his soul. And thus the Holy Spirit maketh use of the works of his grace to convince men of their sin and danger, while they behold a great alteration in others for the better; but have not felt the like in themselves. That God who formeth the spirit of man within him, hath fashioned their hearts alike; so that as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. Ps. 33: 15. Prov. 27: 29. Whence ariseth a kind of sympathy and affection respecting each other; so that, what toucheth the one, affecteth the other. And this is in an especial manner observable in such as are near and dear to each other.

When the child is in distress, the tender parent is presently touched with the feeling of its sorrow. When the brother crieth out in anguish of soul, the kind sister cannot forbear to condole with him. Accordingly when it pleaseth the Holy Spirit to use these inclinations and affections in men as means, good impressions by the divine blessing, wonderfully propagate and multiply. This I find observed by a reverend and dear brother, in his narrative of the surprising work of God in the conversion of many hundred souls in Northampton, and the neighboring towns, etc. "There is no one thing that I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work among us, as the news of others' conversion; in the awakening sinners, and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints."* And as more lately, we have received good news of this kind from more distant places upon this continent, so I cannot but hope that God's sending one and another of his servants among us who had been personally

* See Mr. Edwards's Narrative, p. 39.

acquainted with these later wonderful works of grace, together with their very laborious and fervent preaching, and the ministry of others his servants, has been blessed to convince many of their sins, and awaken them to a serious concern about their souls. Yea, it is hopeful that there are a number converted, and brought home to Christ. Let us give the praise to the God of all grace ; and let pastors and parents, and other Christians in their several places use their best endeavors to forward this good work ; for though the work is the Lord's, and he alone can carry it on with victorious success, yet he delights to use his people as instruments, and expects that in the way of duty they ask his blessing in the more plentiful and extensive effusions of his Spirit. Thus when God had promised to give his people a new heart ; to put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his statutes, he adds, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. Ezek. 36 : 37.

III. Some description of this work of the Spirit in conviction.

I shall at present, only observe a few things in general relating to it.

This work of the Spirit is by divines commonly called preparatory, as it goeth before saving conversion, and is wrought in order to it, respecting such as are afterwards effectually called by the Spirit. By this work, says the excellent Mr. Norton, "We understand certain inherent qualifications, coming between the carnal rest of the soul in the state of sin, and conversion wrought in the ministry both of the law and gospel, by the common work of the Spirit concurring; whereby the soul is put into a ministerial capacity of believing immediately, i. e., of immediate receiving the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the order in which God proceeds in the work of his grace on the souls of such as are grown to years of understanding: he maketh them sensible of their sin and misery and so brings them to seek Jesus who saveth his people from their sins, and to submit to him. Indeed, this work is neither the efficient nor meritorious cause of their saving conversion; however, in this way God awakeneth his people to a

diligent attendance on the means of grace, till he shall work in them to will and to do, and make them his willing people, in the day of his power. And here we may observe that we must not presume to limit and restrain the infinite Spirit of God in this matter, who is called the free Spirit. Ps. 51: 12. No doubt there may be great variety as to degrees of terror, as to the time persons are kept under it, and the like. And we must take heed that in this respect, we do not make our particular experiences general rules to judge of the state of men. God opened the heart of Lydia, and the jailer came trembling with the utmost consternation. And it hath been observed that some have been kept under a spirit of bondage for a considerable time, while other convinced sinners have been in a short time surprised with a visit from the Holy Spirit of God as a spirit of adoption, which supposeth the new birth. Again, as to outward expressions of deep concern in tears, wringing the hands, etc., persons under like inward deep concern of mind may considerably differ according to different con-

stitutions and tempers. Again, Some may have been more heinous transgressors than others, and God may impress their minds with terrible fears, in some proportion. Again, It is no improbable supposition, that some have been converted in early childhood before they were capable of giving a distinct account of this work. Nor need it seem strange, if such as have been favored with a pious education and good impressions from their childhood, should be more at a loss in this matter, than such as have been suddenly surprised, as Saul, while going on in open rebellion against God, and so knocked down under the fearful apprehensions of his wrath, and then raised with the wonderful manifestations of the free grace of God in Jesus Christ super-abounding where sin had abounded. Therefore, such as find upon strict and impartial examination, that they abhor themselves for sin as it is contrary to the declarative glory and revealed will of God, and so turn from all sin unto God, as their chief good and highest end ; that they are willing to submit to Christ as their Prince and Saviour, trusting only to his

righteousness for their justification before God, and taking his yoke upon them : I say, these persons ought not to distress themselves, because they cannot give such a distinct account of the time and manner of this work of conviction, as some others can ; nor yet have experienced so great terrors as others have felt before they were born of the Spirit. Such as have been made sensible of their lost and perishing condition by the fall, and then made willing to receive Jesus Christ in all his offices as their only Saviour, have the things found in them which go before, and accompany salvation, and should be encouraged to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God. However, it is happy for such as are able to give a more clear and distinct account of the peculiar season and manner of this work of the Spirit ; for this has a tendency to bring their minds to a better settlement as to their assurance of the saving work of grace wrought after it. On the other hand, persons who have been under great terrors, and now receive the word with joy, must rejoice with holy fear, and look to

it that they have that contrite and humble spirit with which the high and lofty One dwells, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite one ; for there is a joy which is no true sign of saving conversion. The stony-ground hearers we have described by our Lord, who searcheth the heart. Matt. 13 : 20. He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it. The stony heart was not taken away, nor was there any root of saving grace ; and accordingly in time of trial they withered. And then there is no saving virtue in legal terrors to convert men ; this change is wrought according to the exceeding greatness of God's power. However, neither do I speak these things to damp their joy who upon their conversion may have received the Spirit of God to witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. And I make no doubt but this is the happy case of many, when the Spirit is poured out plentifully. When there were three thousand souls added, we read that they gladly received the word. Acts

2: 41. But then, I am concerned that we may all obey that word, and obtain the benefit of it. Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Gal. 6: 4.

I would only further say at present, that when the Spirit of God convinceth men of sin, he shows them the guilt and destroying power of their sins ; maketh them sensible of their misery and danger as they lie exposed to the curses of the law, and brings them to seek deliverance with earnestness and deep concern. And thus the Spirit prepareth them to hearken to the gracious invitations and offers of the gospel, while he also shows them their utter inability to come up to the terms of the gospel in their own strength, and their great unworthiness that God should work in them to will and to do ; and therefore, that if they are saved, it must be from the free sovereign grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy. And as to such whom the Spirit of God converts, he changeth their hearts, reneweth them in the spirit of their minds respecting every power

of their soul ; and so persuadeth and enableth them to trust in Jesus Christ as the only name given among men, whereby we must be saved ; taking their encouragement from the grace of God, the merits of Christ, and free offers of the gospel. When Christ is thus formed in the heart, the poor creature so highly favored, is ready to cry out, Lord, this salvation is too great and good for me ; but thou art worthy to be believed and obeyed, and nothing is too great or wonderful for thee. Be it unto me according to thy word.

A P P L I C A T I O N .

Use I. Let us pay divine honor to the Holy Spirit, and give him the glory of his works of grace.

His presence with God's people is better to them, even than the bodily presence of Christ upon earth ; for our Saviour assured his disciples that it was expedient for them that he should go away, that the Comforter might come unto them. And he is the dispenser of all grace. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ brought home to the soul, by the communion of the Holy Ghost. We are blessed in his name; common and saving grace is communicated by him to perishing sinners; and therefore we ought to ascribe blessing and glory and honor to him, who is called God. *Acts 5: 3, 4.* There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. *1 John 5: 7.* Let us then fall down and worship that God who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And let us be sensible that the application of the redemption purchased by Christ is from the Holy Spirit. When we behold many convinced of sin, and some in a judgment of charity converted, let us look above men and means, and say, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory. We have in a public and solemn manner sought the Lord for this great gift, and now we should bless God for it, and beseech him to give his Spirit more abundantly.

II. Is it the Spirit of God who reproveth men of sin? Learn the dangerous state of

such as are secure in sin, or stifle their convictions.

It is a dreadful thing for men to be suffered to have an accursed quiet and false peace in the ways of sin. Luke 11: 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. Alas ! Satan ruleth in the hearts of these miserable creatures without control, and they are led captive by him at his will. They hug their chains, and are unconcerned about deliverance, while they are permitted to enjoy the pleasures of sin without remorse of conscience. They sport themselves with their own deceivings. 2 Pet. 2: 13. And God threatens to bring sudden and irrecoverable ruin upon them. When they shall say, peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. 1 Thess. 5: 3. And it is a very dangerous sign when persons are continued under the means of grace, and yet are sleeping in carnal security ; they sleep as on the top of a mast, and are in danger every moment of falling, and of being drowned in

eternal perdition. O, hear God's voice then without delay, lest you lift up your eyes in torments, and in utter despair behold a vast gulf fixed between you and the seat of the blessed ! Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life. Eph. 5: 14. O, cry to God for his Spirit to convince and convert you ! For surely, it is better to endure some present pain and distress, while yet there is hope, than to be shut out in outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever. O, let me not seem to you, while thus warning you to flee from the wrath to come, as Lot to his sons-in-law, as one that mocketh ! Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get ye out of this place ; for the Lord will destroy this city ; but he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. Gen. 19: 14. Thus we may suppose they slept securely that night ; but what came in the morning ? The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, v. 24. And when the fire

from heaven had destroyed their bodies, their miserable souls were cast into hell. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude v. 7. O, escape for your lives then this night, lest by to-morrow you be consumed ! Or have you been favored with convictions, but have stifled and lost them ? Can you remember when the Spirit of God moved on your hearts, exciting you to pray, and attend to the preaching of the word ; to put away sin, and to reform your lives ? But now these good motions cease, and the Spirit is departed from you. Is this your unhappy state ? Know it, your case is very hazardous, yet not desperate. Fear then, lest God should punish you with the men that are settled on their lees. Justify God in this matter, and confess that you have greatly sinned by vexing his good Spirit. At the same time, take heed and beware of going on desperately in your sins, as if there were no hope.

Even such as you, have found mercy. Seek to God then the more earnestly to revive his work in your souls. Be the more sensible from this of the deep corruption of your hearts, and of the enmity of your carnal minds against God; and deprecate that dreadful judgment of judicial blindness and hardness of heart. Bemoan yourselves, and say, O that it was with me, as in months past! And let that be your earnest and continued prayer, Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

III. Let such as are under the convictions of the Spirit, bless God for them; and in the use of all proper means seek the Lord that these may end in a saving conversion.

Hath God sent his Spirit to convince you of sin, and show to you your need of a Saviour? Be encouraged to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ unto you, as the Lord your righteousness; that you may embrace him as he is freely offered in the gospel. Are you brought to attend God's word with fear and concern? O, seek the inward and effectual call of the Spirit! that you may

now say, Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth. Hear the words of our Saviour, and let them strengthen the hands which hang down, and confirm the feeble knees, when you may be ready to faint and wax weary in your minds. Luke 11 : 9. Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. V. 11, If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent ? V. 13, If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ? Now your conversion is hopeful. You are not far from the kingdom of God. O, strive to enter then, looking to God to work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure ! And take heed you do not quench the Spirit by returning to your sins, or to your sinful companions. Now follow hard after God by a constant and diligent attendance to the means of grace. Be frequent and fervent in secret prayer, confessing your sins, and crying for mercy in the

name of Jesus Christ. Get alone, think upon your ways, and meditate upon divine things. Study the word of God, which is perfect, converting the soul ; and take heed how you hear it. For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10: 17. Wait at the posts of wisdom's doors, and labor to be found in those ways in which Christ walks. And yet take heed and beware of depending on your religious duties and outward reformations. Say with yourself, An interest in Christ I must have ; and accordingly while you use the means, seek rest to your souls in him. Be willing to bear the Spirit's reproofs, though sharp and pungent ; but if terrors be overbearing, beseech the Lord that he would not lay more upon you than he shall enable you to bear. Indeed there may be some few ready to complain with Heman, While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted. But blessed be God ! this is not the ordinary case. And where the regular use of reason has been disturbed, I am satisfied it was not so much from any direct impressions of the good Spirit of God,

as from natural disorders of body, or moral distempers of mind. Our gracious God would not have, no, not the incestuous Corinthians, swallowed up with over-much sorrow. 2 Co. 2: 7. However, pray God to show you the plague of your own heart, and be sensible that the wound sin hath given you is incurable, unless it will please the great God our Saviour to be the physician. Accordingly, despairing in yourself, look to Jesus, and say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole. Thy blood cleanseth from all sin, and thy divine Spirit is able to apply it. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. If Satan tempt you to return to your carnal security, or to despair, as if your sins were so great that God would not pardon them, resist him, and cry to God to bruise him under your feet. And labor to be furnished with pertinent texts of Scripture whereby you may answer and confute such evil suggestions. Thus if you are tempted by Satan or your own lusts, to return to your evil courses, answer, it is written, If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleas-

ure in him. Heb. 10 : 38. Or if tempted to say, mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven; answer, it is written, Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isa. 1 : 18. And instead of yielding to the temptation, plead with God, in the words of David, For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. Ps. 25 : 12. And do not perplex yourself as if you had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is unto death. The good impressions you now receive from the Spirit striving with you, make it evident that this is not your case. Again, if you seem to grow worse and worse after considerable labor and striving, be not discouraged as if it was in vain for you to strive any longer. The Spirit of God rather discovereth to you more and more the deep corruption of your hearts, which is an hopeful symptom, and should be improved to convince you more thoroughly of your need of the infinite power and grace of God

to save you. And then, if you are continued for a considerable time under this work, and cannot find rest, do not grow impatient, and say, it is in vain to wait for the Lord any longer. But rather resolve that by his help you will hope and wait for the salvation of God. I pray consider, how long God hath waited upon you, it may be ten, twenty or thirty years; and will you think it hard to wait upon God a few months or years? O, be not so unreasonable and undutiful! It is of the Lord's mercies you are not consumed, and it must be of his free, undeserved mercy, if you are saved. Certainly then you are well treated, and have a rich reward of all your pains, if God shall come at the last and save you, even when this frail short life is just expiring. Or, if others awakened after you, obtain grace and comfort before you, let not your eye be evil, because God is good. Is it not lawful for him to do what he will with his own? O, take heed then and beware of entertaining hard thoughts of God! Lie down at the foot of sovereign grace, and wait God's time without murmuring and com-

plaint. Again, are blasphemous thoughts injected ? Cast them out with abhorrence, and be not dismayed. The evil one who casts these fiery darts, must bear the blame and punishment. In a word, do not perplex yourselves with anxious inquiries about your election. This is absurd and preposterous at this time. Hear that word then, The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut. 29 : 29. Your duty is plainly revealed. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. 2 Pet. 1 : 10. Make sure of the effectual call of the Spirit, and then you may safely conclude that God has loved you with an everlasting love, and so drawn you to himself. Let this great work then be regarded as the one thing needful : however, let not your particular calling be neglected in the season for it. Wherein you are called, abide with God, attending this business also in obedience to him. The work of your salvation will be

most likely to prosper, when every duty is attended in its place and time. Upon the whole, do not conceal the distress of your souls; but be willing to ask and receive advice in a matter of such great importance. Seek the help of your pastors, and other experienced Christians. But then, in the diligent use of means, let your eye and cry be to the God of all grace from whom your help must come. And encourage yourselves in this, that you are in the hands of a God infinitely good and gracious, who has sent the Lord Jesus to bind up the broken-hearted. Behold the Son of God stands at the door and knocks, saying, If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. Rev. 3: 20. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. "O, glorious Lord, do thou speak to them by the inward call of thy Spirit, and they will hear and obey thy voice! Do thou who hast the key of David, who openeth, and no man shutteth; open their hearts, and make them thy willing

people in the day of thy power. Thy words are works. Speak the word, and their souls shall live. Say to one and another that tremble at thy word, Son, daughter, be of good comfort, your sins are forgiven, go in peace." And may you now hear that word of your compassionate Redeemer, Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matt. 11 : 28, 29. And dutifully answer, We come unto thee ; for thou art the Lord our God.

LECTURE II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVINCETH OF SIN.

JOHN 16: 8.

And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin,
and of righteousness, and of judgment.

DOCTRINE.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince and reprove men of sin.

I. The Holy Spirit is the author of this work of conviction.

II. We considered the means which the Spirit of God useth to convince men of sin.

I proceed,

III. To give some brief description of the work of the Spirit in convincing and reproving men of sin. Wherein I shall also consider some of the fruits of these convictions.

Before I speak particularly to this head, I would observe to you, that the infinite Spirit

of God has the nearest access to our spirits, which are his creatures, and can make impressions upon them as he pleaseth; and he convinceth sinners by an inward application to the powers of the soul, the understanding, conscience, &c., before a saving change is wrought in the heart.

1. In this work of conviction, the Spirit of God brings home the sense of sin and guilt to the heart and conscience of the sinner. And then his Spirit is wounded, and his heart moved with fear. Though men will generally acknowledge that they are sinners, yet, alas, there are many unconverted persons, who flatter themselves in their evil ways as if sin had not dominion over them, and they were not walking in the path of the destroyer. Many are in a lamentable manner ignorant of the strictness and purity of God's law, and at the same time very much strangers to their own deceitful hearts. It seems that Paul, while a Pharisee, was not sensible that the first motions of evil concupiscence were sin. Rom. 7: 7. And Ephraim says, "In all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me

that is sin ; " though the balances of deceit were in his hand, and he loved to oppress. Hosea 12: 7, 8. How many false pleas and vain excuses do men frame to blind and bribe their consciences, whereby they are laid asleep in carnal security. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man ; but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 14: 12. So deceitful and desperately wicked are the hearts of men. But when the Spirit of God comes with the word to show men their iniquity, he detects and lays open this deceit, and maketh the sinner know that he has offended the holy, heart-searching God, and stands condemned by his righteous law. Conscience is awakened to do its office, and, as it were, says to the sinner, Thou art the man ! And now he beholdeth his sin in its heinous nature and aggravations ; and, self-judged, maketh that confession before the Lord, Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. Ps. 51: 4. When the Spirit of God reproveth men of sin, they dare not deny the fact, nor excuse the fault or crime cleaving to it ; but rather

deprecate God's entering into judgment with them, saying, with the psalmist, If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Ps. 130: 3. Surely none can stand in the judgment, says the convinced sinner; and as for me, I am now sensible that I must fall under the condemning sentence of the law, vile wretch that I am. And though this may be at first from conviction of some particular sin, as here of the sin of unbelief, yet the Spirit of God leads men up to the consideration of their guiltiness and vileness as children of apostate Adam; showeth them that they sinned in him and fell with him, and that as they proceed from him, they bring a corrupt nature into the world with them, empty of grace and bent unto sin. And now they are ready to subscribe that confession, Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Ps. 51: 5. Now God's word is set home upon their hearts, in which it is declared, that all are under sin; there is none righteous, no, not one. Their mouths are stopped, and they become guilty before God. Rom.

3: 19. And they are ready to acknowledge that they were exposed to the wrath and curse of God, as a generation of vipers, even from their early childhood. And whatever have been their outward attendance on religious duties, and blameless behaviour before men, they now find that they are children of wrath, even as others. This was the case with Saul, afterwards called Paul, though he had lived, as a strict Pharisee, a blameless life, according to his understanding of the law. I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. Rom. 7: 9. While a Pharisee, though he had the law in the letter of it, yet he was without the law, being dreadfully ignorant of the spiritual meaning and use of it, as also of its purity and extensive obligation; and so he thought himself alive, in a good condition, and that he was in a fair way to obtain life by the deeds of the law. But when the commandment was set home upon his conscience, and the Spirit of God convinced him of his sin, by the law, his vain hopes died away, and he found himself in a

state of spiritual death,—dead in trespasses and sins. And this is the case of the closest hypocrites and most specious formalists, when the Spirit of God is pleased to convince and reprove them of sin. When he thus, by his word or providence, sheweth them their work, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded, they can no longer cover their sins, nor flatter themselves in their evil ways. Their own hearts condemn them, and they see themselves exposed to the judgment of that God who is greater than their hearts, and knoweth all things. And accordingly they are ready to fall down before God and confess with them, We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Is. 64: 6. Whence followeth deep concern, and sometimes almost overwhelming anguish and distress of soul. Which leads me to say,

2. In this work the spirit of God maketh men sensible of the deadly evil of sin, and of their miserable state, while under the guilt and dominion of it. As the Spirit of God

shows sinners the guilt and power of their sins, so he declareth to them the dreadful punishment which they lie exposed to as transgressors of the law; that the wages of sin is death, not only temporal but eternal death. Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Job 31: 3. Yes, surely, and when the Spirit of God pleaseth, he can make the stoutest sinner sensible of it. Such is the folly and madness bound up in the hearts of men, that they are ready to make a mock of sin. While asleep in carnal security, they dream of enjoying the pleasures of sin, without enduring the punishment. He flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. Ps. 36: 2. Thus it is said of the young man, void of understanding, when enticed by the adulteress, He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the flocks, till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Prov. 7: 22, 23. Men do not know, they will not

consider the end of sin, though faithfully warned in God's word ; and so they often go on in the ways which lead to death, till they are suddenly destroyed. The simple pass on, and are punished. Prov. 22: 3. And the old serpent, the devil, is still ready to tempt us as he did Eve, Ye shall not surely die. This subtle tempter seeks to allure men, by setting before them the carnal pleasures and profits of sin ; and at the same time laboreth to divert their minds from all serious consideration of the punishment. Alas, how successfully ! It is supposed that there might be found among God's people, man or woman that would say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. But the Lord threatens, That he will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses written in this book shall lie upon him. Deut. 29: 18, 20. And accordingly when the Spirit of God shoots the arrows of conviction into the sinner's heart, he sheweth him the daring presumption of this, and maketh him

know that sin is an evil thing, and will be bitterness in the end. The Spirit makes men feel the plague of their own hearts, and the deadly wounds sin hath given them. Now they find that description agreeth to them: The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. Is. 1: 5, 6.

When the word of God is thus impressed upon the sinner's heart, it is like fire, respecting the light it gives to discern the evil of sin, and the pain and misery inflicted on the soul consequent upon this. Thus the Spirit of God shows men the great evil of an heart of unbelief, whereby they depart from the living God, and reject the only Saviour, by such a word as that, He that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark 16: 16. The great evil of a hard and impenitent heart, whereby men treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, by such a word as that, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13: 3. And their consciences are inflamed

with painful apprehensions of the burning wrath of God due to them for their sins. Now that word cometh home to them, Thou hast destroyed thyself. Hos. 13 : 9. And sensible of their miserable state, they cry out, with the prodigal, I perish. Luke 15: 17. They no longer dream that the pleasures of sin can be separated from the punishment ; but now find they have to do with an holy, heart-searching, jealous God, that will by no means clear the guilty. God speaks to them by his word, together with the inward impressions of his Spirit, as, These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself ; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Ps. 50: 21, 22. And while the Spirit of God is thus a spirit of bondage, the sinner trembleth for fear of God, and is afraid of his judgments. Thus we read, The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites ; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ?

Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Is. 33: 14. They now know the terrors of the Lord, and find that he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity without abhorrence. They are in anguish while their sins lie heavy upon them, and the iron yoke galls their consciences; and are ready to complain that their iniquities are gone over their heads, as a heavy burden, too heavy for them to bear. Yea, now the sinner is sometimes almost dismayed with fear, lest God should take him away with a stroke, and cast him into hell.

3. When the Spirit of God reproveth of sin, he brings the sinner to humble himself before God. When the arrows of conviction are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, the people fall down under him. Ps. 45: 5. Thus it is when our Lord rides forth on the word of truth, accompanied with the Holy Spirit, the sinner lieth prostrate at his feet, sensible that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, as an avenger of sin. Now there is a work of humiliation wrought, in which the haughtiness of the

sinner's spirit is quelled, and he is cast down, convinced that he cannot resist God and prosper. He is made sensible that God can break him in pieces, and that none is able to deliver out of his hand. Such a word as that is set home upon his conscience, See now that I, even I am he, and there is no god with me ; I kill, and I make alive ; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. And when the convinced sinner finds himself thus in the hands of that God, who is able to save or destroy for ever, he lieth down in the dust before him. Now the lofty looks of men are humbled, and God is exalted. Thus when God denounced dreadful threatenings against Ahab, by the prophet Elijah, it is said, And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and

went softly. 1 Kings 21: 27. Yea, such was his humiliation, though here was no true saving repentance, that God was pleased to take a gracious notice of it, and mitigate the judgment threatened. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days. v. 29. In like manner, the cruel, hardy jailer fell down before Paul and Silas, as the servants of the most high God, humbly to intreat them to show him the way of salvation. Acts 16: 29, 30. Had he done this to worship them, they would have rejected it with abhorrence. He did it, as a judicious expositor supposeth, “being moved by the fear of God’s judgments thus to humble himself.”* When men are thus convinced, their haughty and stubborn spirits are brought down, they are forced to quit their carnal confidences as refuges of lies, and are brought before God, as the servants of Benhadad came in his name, before the king of Israel, with ropes upon their heads, and with that submissive request, I pray thee let me live.

* Calvin.

To allude to those words, 1 Kings 20: 31, 32. For they now find that they lie at God's mercy, and have a dread of his fiery indignation, lest it should consume them. We read that the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. Ps. 10: 4. But when God cometh upon the sinner by his Spirit, to show him his sin and misery, and the danger he is in of being broken to pieces in the day of his wrath, then you shall hear him cry, Mercy, Lord, mercy for a miserable sinner, or I perish !

4. When the Spirit doth thus convince of sin, he maketh the sinner confess his sin, and exciteth him to reform his life. Though in this work there is not a principle of saving grace infused in opposition to sin, yet sin is made bitter from the fruits of it; so that while the Spirit of God doth in this manner strive with the sinner, and impresseth on his mind a dread of God's wrath, he dare not go on in his evil courses, and cannot relish the pleasures of sin, as when he lived in carnal security, fearing lest that threatening should be fulfilled upon him, How much she hath

glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her. Rev. 18: 7. His case is like that expressed in Job 20: 12—14. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. And now the burden of sin lieth so heavy upon the consciences of men, that they are compelled, as it were, to seek relief by confessing their sins before God; and they find themselves constrained to cry out of their sad and wretched state before men. When Samuel reproved Saul for not utterly destroying Amalek, though at first he endeavored to excuse himself, yet when the prophet declared to him that because he had rejected the word of the Lord, God had also rejected him from being king; being convicted in his conscience, he said, I have sinned. 2 Sam. 15: 24. And now the sinner is sick of his sin, and casts it up. He cannot now drink down iniquity like water, with greediness and delight, as he

did before ; but rather abstains from the outward commission of it, and formeth resolutions against it. If tempted, while the Spirit is thus striving with him, it is as if you should offer pleasant drink to a man, and at the same time assure him that there is poison in the cup. He, for the present, at least, puts away sin for fear of wrath, and turns from his wicked companions. You may observe a visible alteration in him. While these strong convictions of the Spirit are upon him, he is restrained from the commission of sin ; but then if he is left to quench these good motions, and the Spirit is provoked to depart from him, and cease striving ; we have his dismal case described in 2 Pe. 2: 20—22. If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome ; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it

is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. O it is a dreadful thing to sin against such light, and stifle such convictions of the Spirit ! Let such as are favored with them take heed therefore, and beware of this most dangerous and provoking evil.

5. In this work the Spirit of God showeth men the utter insufficiency of creature comforts to afford relief to their troubled minds. While men are secure in sin, they are very prone to promise themselves satisfaction in their outward enjoyments, and so to be unconcerned about obtaining the favor of God. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Job 21: 13, 14. The riches and pleasures of this life often divert men's minds from a serious attention to the calls of the gospel. When invited to partake of the rich provision God hath made for perishing sinners, They

make light of it, and go their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize. Matt. 22: 5. They are ready to say with the rich man, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. Luke 12: 19. But now when the Spirit of God convinceth the sinner of the perishing condition of his soul, he says to him, Thou fool, this night thy soul may be required of thee; you hang over the bottomless pit by the slender thread of a frail life, and may before to-morrow lift up your eyes in torments. And when thus reproved of their sin and folly, their carnal confidence and satisfaction in creatures are blasted, and their mirth is turned into heaviness. None of their worldly enjoyments appear to them as they did before; they have lost their relish for them. For now they are convinced that these things cannot profit in the day of wrath, nor redeem them from destruction. Yea, if they have gotten their earthly possessions by unrighteous practices, the Spirit of God showeth them that they have been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. And now

they are ready to say, What shall it profit us, though we gain the whole world, and lose our souls? What good will these things do us, if we must sink down under the weight of God's wrath, and perish for ever in hell? Alas! we shall be the more miserable upon the account of them, in the terrible day of the Lord. And thus are they brought to realize it, that if they would find rest for their souls, they must seek better things, and are convinced of the great evil of seeking their happiness in creatures, in opposition to God. Which leads me to say,

6. When the Spirit of God convinceth men of sin, he exciteth them to seek deliverance in the diligent use of the means of grace and salvation. Now they find that nothing can give them ease, while the burden of sin lieth heavy upon them, and accordingly they are concerned to seek the Lord in the ways of his own appointment, if haply they may find him who alone is able to save them from sin and death. Before, they might cast off fear, and restrain prayer, but now they cry for mercy. Indeed, the force of education

and custom may prevail with men to attend religious duties ; but then this is done in formality, and with little concern about their souls. Whereas, when the Holy Spirit cometh upon men, to convince them of their sin and danger, his voice is like that in Jonah 1: 6. What meanest thou, O sleeper ? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And when these convictions are strong upon them, they are ready to make that inquiry, with great seriousness, What must I do to be saved ? Acts 16: 30. And to say with them who were pricked in their heart, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? And now it may be said of them, as of Saul, Behold, he prayeth. Acts 9: 11. No doubt Saul, having been a Pharisee, had made many prayers before this ; but now, in anguish of spirit, we may suppose he was ready to say, with the publican, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. The whole need not the physician. But when sinners are made to feel the smart of those deadly wounds which sin hath given them, and at the same time hear of a Saviour,

they are pressed in spirit to seek to him, saying, Lord, save me, or I perish. Now they also attend to the preaching of the word after another manner than before, finding that the threatenings and reproofs of God's word belong to them. And being concerned to flee from the wrath to come, their fears urge them to mind the duties of religion, and to strive to enter in at the strait gate, lest their day of grace should end before they have obtained an interest in Jesus Christ; for now they dread the damnation of hell.

7. The Spirit of God beats men off from a carnal dependence on their religious duties, and sheweth them that their salvation must come from God alone.

It is to be feared that many who have been under convictions, and so turned from open impiety to some outward reformation and attendance on religious duties, stop here, and never go out to Christ for salvation. Our Lord assureth us that there are foolish virgins in the visible church, that content themselves with an outward profession, without being concerned to obtain the oil of saving grace in

their hearts ; and then fall asleep in carnal security, until they are awaked by the midnight cry, Go ye out to meet him. And then they are wholly at a loss, finding the door of mercy shut against them. They cry, Lord, Lord, open to us ; but he answereth, I know you not. Matt. 25. And, therefore, when the Spirit of God is pleased to carry on his work, he convinceth men of the great evil and danger of their resting here, without a saving conversion to God, and union with Christ by faith. He sheweth them more and more, the vileness of their own hearts, and the absolute necessity of their being renewed in the spirit of their minds, after the image of God ; that, except they are born again, they cannot see the kingdom of God. And convinceth them that if they are saved after all, it must not be according to works which they have done, but according to the free grace and mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. The promise is not made to them that labor and are heavy laden ; but to them, who, being heavy laden with the burden of their sins, go to Christ upon his most

gracious call and invitation, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. 11: 28. And our Lord declareth, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. John 6: 37. Now we go to Christ in the exercise of faith. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst, v. 35. Nor is the promise made to them that attend religious duties merely from a slavish fear and dread of wrath, and without any sincere regard to the glory of God. Indeed, it is not sin for persons while unconverted, to pray to God, hear his word, &c. No: such duties as these God requireth of them, and they are to be exhorted and encouraged to seek the Lord in these ways of his appointment, forasmuch as God has often been found of men, while in the diligent use of means; but, then, they must be made sensible that they fail in the manner of their attending upon these religious duties. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11: 6. And, therefore, if men depend on the discharge of these religious duties, instead of using them as means to lead

them to Christ, that they may be justified and saved by faith in him, they rest on a sandy foundation which will certainly fail them. Accordingly when the Spirit of God carrieth on his work, he reproveth this Pharisaic pride, and convinceth men of the great evil of it: so that they dare not stand before God, as the Pharisee did, saying, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess. Luke 18: 12. No, but rather with the publican, cry for mercy, after all the pains they have taken to seek the Lord in the way of duty. The Spirit of God sheweth men that except their righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5: 20. And maketh them sensible that, notwithstanding all their labors in duty and outward reformation, God might damn them should he deal with them in a way of strict justice; and that if they are saved, their salvation must come from the Lord. And thus is the way of the

Lord prepared by the Spirit, that the Son of God may come into the hearts of his chosen people, and give rest to their weary souls. Indeed, this work hath not a causal virtue to produce saving grace, as has been hinted. After all, there must be a saving change wrought in all the powers of the soul by the Spirit of God, that we may receive Jesus Christ upon the gracious offer and command of the gospel. We must have Jesus Christ revealed to us, and have that faith wrought in us by the Spirit, whereby we may close with him on gospel terms; and that repentance whereby we may turn from all sin unto God. There must be such a conviction of our need of righteousness, and of the perfection of Christ's righteousness, as that we may depend on him entirely for justification before God. And there must be such a conviction of judgment, as that we may submit to the Son of God as our Lord and Judge, saying, O Lord, our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. Isa. 26: 13. O that this may be the happy issue of the

Spirit's striving with elder and younger persons! And may none be left to resist and quench his good motions! Come, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!

A P P L I C A T I O N .

Use 1. Let us inquire into the state of our souls; particularly, whether we have had the experience of this work of the Spirit. Has the Holy Spirit convinced us of our sin and misery by the fall, so that we have been made sensible of our lost, perishing state, as we are the children of the first Adam, in whom all die? It is true, there may be considerable variety as to the degree of the Spirit's operation. Some may have greater terror, and of longer continuance than others, as we before observed. But, then, we have reason to conclude that the Spirit of God is a spirit of bondage unto fear, to every unconverted person grown to years of understanding and judgment, before he is a spirit of regeneration and adoption. And, therefore, such as are confident of their being in a state

of salvation, without a conviction of sin, and painful sense of the defiling and destroying evil of it, have just reason to fear that they deceive themselves.

Our Saviour declareth to the Laodiceans, who were puffed up with a proud and false conceit of themselves, that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, before he counsels them to come to him for gold tried in the fire, that they might be enriched with saving grace more precious than gold, &c. Rev. 3: 17, 18. Let us then, examine and try ourselves, whether we have ever felt the burden of our sins too heavy for us to bear, and been made sensible of the vile corruption of our hearts ; so as to cry to God for deliverance, being convinced that nothing short of his almighty power and grace can save us. And here, supposing the case, that some of you were converted while very young ; yet it is incumbent on you to inquire, whether you have such a spiritual sight of the evil of sin, as to be in bitterness upon the account of it, and to be excited to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

This is plain, that the best of men, in this imperfect state, have reason to cry out, Lord, help our unbelief! And to groan out that complaint, O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!

Rom. 7: 24. And when they have indulged themselves for any time in carnal security, or fallen into scandalous sins, the Spirit of God has so withdrawn from them, that they have been brought into great perplexity, and could have no solid peace till renewed to repentance.

This was David's case. Ps. 51. And Peter's. Luke 22: 61, 62. Agreeably, our Saviour said to him, When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Luke 22: 32. Indeed, that God who hath begun a good work in true converts, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. However, even these may need a further and more thorough conversion from particular ways of sinning, that they may be in a meet disposition to attend the duties and enjoy the blessings of Christ's kingdom, after a comfortable manner. Matt. 18: 3. Surely, then, there is weighty reason why we should all of us look into the state of our souls, and

inquire what convictions we have experienced, and what hath been the issue of them. And after all, we should make use of that prayer, Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps. 139: 23, 24.

Use 2. Are the convictions of the Spirit so sharp and pungent sometimes? How dreadful must it be to fall under the vindictive wrath of God in hell for ever.

Do sinners, now, while there is hope, fear and tremble before the Lord, when he thus reproveth them for sin? Are they pricked to the heart, and sometimes ready to cry out, under the heavy load of sin, A wounded spirit who can bear! Certainly, then the torments of hell will be altogether intolerable; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Hell is a bottomless pit, in which the damned sink down in everlasting despair, without the least gleam of hope, while the wrath of God is poured out upon them to the uttermost. The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there

shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt. 8: 12. Can you not bear the Spirit's convictions, when he sets home the threatenings of God's word upon your consciences? How will you then be able to hear that sentence pronounced by your Lord and Judge, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and then to have it executed upon you. O, you will be utterly consumed with terrors!

Use 3. Let such as have their hearts hardened from the fear of God, ask the Holy Spirit to convince them of their sin and danger, before it be too late.

O, let the terrors of the Lord rouse you! Open your eyes, consider your heinous iniquity in hardening your hearts against God at such a time as this, and behold your extreme danger of perishing in your sins. For who hath hardened himself against God and hath prospered? O let that awful word sink down into your ears, and into your hearts, He, that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. 29: 1. Amazing stupidity!

You cannot but hear others complaining of a hard heart, and desiring prayers that God would take away the stony heart and give a heart of flesh, tender and quick to receive impressions of God's word and Spirit. And are you still unconcerned? How dangerous a symptom is this! What a deadly lethargy has seized your souls! And how great is the danger that you will never awake, till you lift up your eyes in torments! Are you not nigh to that dreadful curse, He which is filthy, let him be filthy still? Do not conclude that God will, but be greatly afraid lest he should utterly forsake you. Deprecate that fearful judgment, and cry to God to deliver you from it; acknowledging that God would be justified should he thus speak against you, and be clear should he thus judge you. God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. Rom. 11: 8.

And let your sad experience teach you that it is not in men nor outward means, to convince you of sin and awaken you out of your carnal security, unless the Spirit accom-

pany these means, and apply them to your souls. And accordingly, mourn bitterly because you have resisted and vexed the good Spirit of God, and take heed you proceed no further to do despite to the Spirit of grace; and so live only to fill up the measure of your sins, and to ripen for a much sorer punishment, than many others who perish, shall endure. O thou infinitely powerful and gracious God, with whom all things are possible, do thou awaken them, and pluck them as brands out of the fire !

Use 4. Let such as have received the Spirit of God as a spirit of conviction, cherish his motions, and cry to God more earnestly for his Spirit as a spirit of regeneration and adoption.

Though I have spoken to you more largely in the former discourse, yet I cannot forbear further to advise and direct you. Do not rest here, but be encouraged the more earnestly to seek the things which accompany salvation. It is hopeful that this work is brought nigh to the birth ; cry to God for strength, that it may be brought forth with the shouting of grace unto it. And if your distress should now increase,

do not faint ; but rather cry, with the Psalmist, The troubles of my heart are enlarged : O bring me out of my distresses. Ps. 25 : 17. It may be the new birth will quickly follow, to your unspeakable joy. But then you must be sensible that this cannot be by any might or power of your own ; but only by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. Look above yourself then, and all creatures, unto the Lord, that you may be saved. And let it encourage you, that this work is in the hands of the good Spirit of God, who delighteth in holiness ; and may be called the Holy Spirit in Scripture, partly because it is his work to renew God's people in the spirit of their minds, after the image of God, which consists in knowledge, righteousness and holiness ; that it is in the hands of the almighty Spirit of God, who can convert you more easy than you can speak a word. Surely nothing is to be despaired of, while this divine Spirit is working upon your hearts.

O seek the more earnestly then to that God who is able to do for you above all you can ask or think ! And now strive, even as

in agony, that you may enter in at the strait gate of a saving conversion. Why may it not be this night? Why may there not be a saving union between Christ and your souls even now? Come, all things are ready. O God! Do thou draw them! for there is no man can come to the Son, except the Father draw him. We wait for thee, more than they that watch for the morning. May the power of the Lord be present, to heal the broken in heart and bind up their wounds! May there be joy in heaven over many repenting sinners! And may the mourners in Zion have the oil of joy given them for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Use 5. Let such as have received the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of adoption, praise the God of all grace, and walk humbly with him.

Hath God revealed his Son in and to you, by giving you his Spirit to convince you of his righteousness, and to enable you to believe in him to the saving of your souls? Is the love of God thus shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost? Is Christ thus

formed in you? Hail, you are highly favored, the Lord is with you, and you are blessed. Flesh and blood have not revealed the Son of God unto you, but the Father which is in heaven. Let your souls, then, magnify the Lord, and your spirits rejoice in your Saviour. Give glory to God, and say, each one of you, after Christ, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. Matt. 11: 25, 26. And then look to the foundation of your joy, that it be laid in deep repentance. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Look to it that your joy be a humble, holy joy, and such as shall be your strength in running the way of God's commandments. Of true joy it is said, The joy of the Lord is your strength. Neh. 8: 10. Let it be as oil to the wheels of your obedience, and let your hearts be lift up in the ways of God, while you happily find that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. Say,

with the apostle Paul, Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. 2 Cor. 1: 12. O, take heed, beware of pride and carnal security. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. And when God hath spoken peace, turn not again to folly.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption; but walk in him, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Do not boast as if your work was done, and your warfare accomplished; but rather expect to meet with temptations, and put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Think it not strange, if God should hide his face, after you have had the light of his countenance lifted up upon you. This is no other trial than what many of God's children have endured. Be encouraged, then, to hear and obey that word, Isa. 50: 10, Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of

his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God. Hope in God, and wait patiently for him, till he shall cause light to arise again unto you. And let none of these things move you, neither count your lives dear, that you may finish your course with joy.

To conclude, let us, with humble thankfulness, behold that remarkable work of grace which I trust God is carrying on in this town and other places; and be encouraged to seek the Lord more earnestly, that his kingdom may come with power, by the more plentiful effusions of his Holy Spirit; and that the Lord would rebuke Satan in all his attempts to hinder or reproach this work, and bruise him under our feet. Let us bless God for his Spirit and grace manifested in and with his servants that have preached the gospel among us, and for the great success which has attended their painful labors. However, let us not have men's persons in admiration because of advantage; but remember that word, So, then, neither is he that planteth

any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase. 1 Cor. 3: 7. And, accordingly, let the glory be given to the God of all grace. And my brethren, I apprehend we should reflect upon it as a fault and infirmity, that though you had such repeated opportunities of hearing those worthy persons, that yet one and another assembly hath been crowded in such a manner, as even to make disturbance on the Lord's day, while others have been, in a considerable degree, left destitute.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. And let the stated provision of God's house be duly valued by you. Let your zeal for the ordinances continue, and be manifested in your constant and diligent attendance on the public worship, in an especial manner on the Lord's day. And when you wait upon God, in the use of the means of grace, always bear in mind, those words, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit. Isa. 58: 17. And let that apostolical exhortation be duly regarded by you, We

beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly, in love, for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thes. 5: 12, 13. The more there is of mutual esteem and love between ministers and their people, the fairer prospect is there of the success of their ministry. And the more concerned we are to study the things which make for peace, the more likely shall we be to edify one another. When brethren dwell together in unity, God commandeth the blessing on Zion. Ps. 133. Let us, then, avoid all unchristian heats and animosities, all rash judging and censuring one another. And in opposition to this, let all unite their best endeavors, in their several places, to promote the great interest of pure and undefiled religion ; that Christ may increase, and his kingdom flourish among us. And may it please the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to bless you and all his people, by fulfilling that good word, Ezek. 39: 29, Neither will I hide my face any more from them : for I have

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poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel,
saith the Lord God. And blessed be his
glorious name for ever and ever, and let the
earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and
amen !

LECTURE III.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVINCETH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JOHN 16: 8.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

DOCTRINE I.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince and reprove men of sin.

This doctrine hath been spoken to at the Tuesday Evening Lecture, in Brattle Street, where I am persuaded God has blessed the labors of his servants for spiritual good to many. May it please our glorious Lord to grant his gracious presence with us also at this Lecture, and to command his blessing on the ministry of the word and prayer, that

* Preached at the opening of a FRIDAY EVENING LECTURE, in the Old South Meeting-House, Boston, April 17, 1741.

sinners may be convinced and converted, and the children of God grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ! Lord, we wait upon thee for the more abundant effusions of thy Spirit, humbly acknowledging that neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth : but God that giveth the increase.

Having considered the work of the Holy Spirit in convincing and reproving men of sin, by which they are brought to despair in themselves, and made sensible of their need of a Saviour to deliver them from sin and wrath, we now proceed to show that by the same Spirit the humbled sinner is convinced that Jesus is the just one, who hath brought in an everlasting righteousness for the justification of sinners before God. Now the medium or argument which the Spirit is said to use for this end, we have in v. 10, Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more. An undeniable evidence that he came forth from God, and had finished the work which the Father gave him to do upon earth. Behold our Saviour

appearing in heaven for his people as a lamb that had been slain, and ever living to make intercession for them ; and let awakened sinners be encouraged to look off from themselves and all mere creatures, and to look up unto Jesus as able to save even to the uttermost. Hear his voice from the excellent glory, Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth. Isa. 45 : 22. May the God of salvation look down in his tender mercy upon us, and cause his words to come into our hearts in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power !

DOCTRINE II.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince men of righteousness.

Under this doctrine and for the confirmation of it, we may consider the following particulars.

- I. What is here intended by righteousness.
- II. Show that it is the Spirit who convinceth of righteousness.
- III. Consider the means which the Spirit useth to convince men of righteousness.

IV. Offer some description of this work of the Spirit.

I. What is here intended by righteousness.

I answer, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In this I think expositors are generally agreed, and v. 10 applieth it to Christ.

More particularly,

1. The Spirit of God convinceth men that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ the righteous ; the true Messiah, and no impostor.

Thus the words are understood by some as especially intending Christ's own personal righteousness. Jesus is the Son of God, and one with the Father in the essential perfections and rectitude of the divine nature. I and my Father are one. John 10: 30. And to him those words, Ps. 45: 6, 7, are applied, Heb. 1: 8, 9. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. And in his human nature taken into personal union with his divine, he was perfectly free from all even the least sin from his conception and birth, and throughout

his whole life. Thus it was said to the blessed virgin. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1: 35. And as to his life, none could ever convince him of evil; for he did none, nor was guile found in his mouth. Yea, his holy Father who seeth in secret, saw no defect or blemish in him. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3: 17. Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Heb. 7: 26. Indeed he was accused as a deceiver, a blasphemer, a friend of publicans and sinners. But even then, wisdom was justified of her children, and there were some who beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. The characters given of the Messiah unite in him, and the apostle Peter declareth concerning him, Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by

him in the midst of you. Acts 2: 22. And though he was numbered with the transgressors, yet we must remember that he suffered the just for the unjust. The Messiah was cut off, but not for himself. Accordingly we find in the sacred history, that Pilate his judge pronounced him innocent ; and Judas who had the greatest advantages to know his Master's life and conversation, in great horror confessed that he had betrayed the innocent blood. And when Peter charged the Jews with this horrible crime, of denying the holy one and the just, and desiring a murderer to be granted unto them, great numbers were convinced of their heinous sin in crucifying the Lord of glory, and brought to trust in him as the true Messiah and only Saviour.

Acts 2: 3.

2. That there is in Christ a mediatorial righteousness to be imputed to his people for their justification before God.

And this is supposed, by worthy expositors, to be principally intended in the words. One of the glorious titles given to our Lord Jesus is, that, The Lord our Righteousness. Jer.

23: 6. It was prophesied of the Messiah, that he should finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Dan. 9: 24. And it is no small part of the glory of the gospel, that in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Rom. 1: 16, 17. Here it is declared that the Son of God in our nature was made sin for his people, the iniquities of God's people being laid upon him; that they might be made the righteousness of God in him, having his perfect righteousness imputed to them for their justification, when they receive him by faith. Indeed this great doctrine was to the carnal Jews a stumbling-block. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Rom. 10: 3. And it was to the Greeks foolishness. They imagined it was an absurd thing to trust in Christ for righteousness, who was crucified as if he had been the vilest malefactor. But now, when the Spirit of God has convinced his people of

their sin, and made them sensible that they must go out of themselves for righteousness, he revealeth the Son to them, in whom God is reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their iniquities ; and maketh manifest the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. Rom. 3 : 21, 22. This divine Spirit sheweth them the fullness, the sufficiency of this righteousness for their justification, and enableth them, even when they have the deepest sense of the greatness of their sins, to rely upon Christ, that they may be accepted as righteous with God.

Thus it was with the apostle Paul after Christ was revealed unto him. Though he had some of the strongest temptations to indulge confidence in the flesh, yet he counted all loss for Christ. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in

him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Phil. 3 : 7—9.

3. This righteousness may intend the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ communicated to his people for their sanctification, and to make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Christ is of God made unto his people, righteousness, also sanctification. 1 Cor. 1 : 30. As they have his perfect righteousness imputed to them for their justification before God, so they derive inherent righteousness from him when they are renewed after the image of God. Our Lord Jesus is the head of all gracious influences, and with him is the spring of our spiritual life. It pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell. Col. 1 : 19. And of his fullness we receive, and grace for grace. John 1 : 16. Now when the Spirit of God hath convinced men that they are by nature empty of grace, and utterly impotent of spiritual good, he showeth them also that Christ has purchased abundance of grace and of the gift of right-

eousness to communicate to his people ; and that there is a fountain opened in him to cleanse, not only from the guilt, but also from the defilements of sin, till believers shall be presented faultless before him. The Holy Spirit convinceth men that Christ must be the author and finisher of faith, and other graces in them ; and that though of themselves they can do nothing, yet that through Christ strengthening them, they may do all things necessary to salvation.

II. We proceed to show, that it is the work of the Spirit to convince men of this righteousness.

Here I may say, that it is the Holy Spirit who maketh the effectual application of the redemption purchased by Christ to the souls of men. We are saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Tit. 3 : 5, 6. The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God are brought home to his chosen people, by the communion of the Holy Ghost. And in particular, the saving evidence and conviction of the great doctrines of the gospel

respecting Christ's person as God-man, and respecting his mediation, are from the same Spirit. Agreeably, our Saviour declared to his disciples, v. 13, When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. The word is emphatical, and signifieth not only that the Spirit would discover these truths in the notion of them, but also that he would lead his disciples into an experimental acquaintance with them, so that they should live and act under the governing influence of them. It follows, v. 14, He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. And therefore the apostle Paul prayeth to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, to give to the Christian Ephesians the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. Eph. 1: 16—20. And the same apostle, speaking of Christ and him

crucified, declareth that these things are revealed by the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Cor. 2: 10. As the Spirit moved on the face of the waters, when darkness was on the face of the deep, and created the light, so in the new creation, he moveth on the hearts of his people, and gives them the light of the knowledge of Christ and his righteousness. The Spirit of God then is the author of this conviction. It is he that reneweth his people in knowledge, when he forms the new man in them. Agreeably we read of the demonstration of the Spirit. 1 Cor. 2: 4. And when the apostle John had said that Christ came by water and blood, that he might save us both from the guilt and defilement of sin, he further observeth in the same verse, It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 1 John 5: 6. It is the divine Spirit then who declareth to men that we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins.

III. We may consider the means which the Spirit of God useth to convince men of Christ's righteousness.

1. The Spirit of God maketh use of his word to convince men of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour declareth that the Scriptures testify of him. John 5: 39. And if we diligently consult the prophecies, types and promises of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and then compare them with the revelation and history of the New Testament, we shall find a wonderful harmony and agreement between them, and be obliged to acknowledge that in sending Jesus to save his people from their sins, God has performed the mercy promised to the fathers, and remembered his holy covenant. Now prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. 1: 21. Accordingly it is said of them who prophesied of the grace which should come unto us, that they searched diligently what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 Pet. 1: 10, 11. If we read Ps.

22, Isa. 7: 14, 52, Dan. 9, and many other prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, we shall see that the Spirit of God in and by his inspired word did testify of Christ, and particularly of the perfect righteousness which he was to bring in for the justification of sinners. By his knowledge, by the knowledge of himself, shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities, Isa. 53: 11. Dan. 9: 24. Our Saviour while in the exercise of his ministry upon earth, applied to himself the famous prophecy we have recorded, Isa. 61: 1—3, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4: 18, 19, vs. 21, 22. This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And after his resurrection, when he

had rebuked two of his disciples for being so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, it is said, Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. Luke 24 : 27. And it is plain our Lord accompanied his word with the light and heat of his divine Spirit; for they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? v. 32. And after Christ's ascension into heaven, when the Spirit of God was poured out from on high, the apostles and other ministers of Christ did evidently prove from Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ, to the saving conversion of great numbers, and the confusion of his implacable enemies.

Thus it was when the preaching of the word was attended with the power of the Holy Ghost, many believed, and turned to the Lord. The full evidence of Scripture, when thus impressed on the mind, cannot be gainsayed. We read of Apollos who was mighty in the Scriptures, and fervent in the

Spirit, that he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ. Acts 18: 28. The apostle Paul tells us that there was a veil over the hearts of the Jews in reading of the Old Testament, which is done away in Christ. 2 Cor. 3: 14. He then adds, v. 18. We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. So clear and powerful is the reflection of the glory of Christ from the word of God, when the Spirit removeth the veil of spiritual blindness. Now the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shineth into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. The Spirit of God convinceth men of the righteousness of Christ, by his resurrection from the dead.

We read of Christ, that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Rom. 4: 25. "By the merit of his death, he paid our debt: in his resur-

rection he took out our acquittance." When he suffered on the cross, the sins of his people were laid upon him as their surety, and had he not given full satisfaction to divine justice for them, he must have been held in the prison of the grave, he could never have risen from the dead. But Jesus is risen according to his word and promise, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. John 2: 19. We have incontestable proof of this important fact in the holy Scriptures, particularly from many faithful witnesses who sealed their testimony with their blood. Now this great work of Christ's resurrection is ascribed to the Father, to the Son himself; and he is also said to be quickened by the Spirit. 1 Pet. 3: 18. And he is said to be declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Rom. 1: 4. And indeed this is a strong proof that our Saviour was the person he professed himself to be, the Son of God by eternal generation. Thus an expositor observeth on the place, "The sign of the prophet Jonas, i. e., Christ's re-

surrection, was intended for the last conviction. Matt. 12: 39, 40. Those that would not be convinced by that, would be convinced by nothing." * Accordingly when the apostle Peter would convince the Jews that Jesus whom they crucified, was the Christ, he declareth his resurrection from the dead. He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Acts 2: 31, 32. And the Spirit of God being then given to set home the word on their hearts, many were convinced, and brought to repent and believe in Christ unto salvation. vs. 37—41. Yea, of such great moment is the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, that the evidence of the truth of the Christian religion very much depends upon it. If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 1 Cor. 15: 14. And he repeateth it, v. 17, If Christ be not raised, then is your faith vain; ye are yet in your sins. And there-

* Cont. Mr. Henry.

fore the apostle sets himself to prove this doctrine in this chapter. And in Rom. 8, he lays the greatest stress upon it. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again? v. 34. Here we see then that the Spirit of God in his inspired word, maketh great use of Christ's resurrection as an evidence of his being the true Messiah, and the only name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved; and when he pleaseth to set home this argument on the hearts of men, they conclude that in Christ, and him only there is a perfect righteousness for their justification before God.

3. The Spirit convinceth men of the righteousness of Christ, by his ascension into heaven, and session at the right hand of God. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.

When our Lord had through the Holy Ghost given commandments unto the apostles, and showed himself alive unto them after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, he was

taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Acts 1: 9. And the word of God declareth that he is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high, and must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. Thus we see Jesus, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. Now he could never have been received to the glorious rest of heaven, had he not finished his work on earth. Accordingly we read, By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Heb. 9: 12. Had not his precious blood been of value to make atonement for sin, and purchase the justification of life for his people, the man Christ Jesus could never have gone to heaven, powerfully to intercede for his people, and prepare a place for them. He asks for nothing in the behalf of his people but what he has purchased, and bought by a valuable price. Agreeably, we have those two parts of his priestly office, his obedience to death, and the prevailing power of his intercession put together, as

indeed they are dependent on each other. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2: 1, 2. And thus while the Father heareth the Son, and distributeth pardon and grace to his people, righteousness and peace kiss each other. This is then an undeniable evidence that Christ is approved and accepted of God in the great work of our redemption. Our Lord addeth, And ye see me no more; upon which a learned divine observeth, “If he had ascended without fulfilling all righteousness for the church, he should have been sent down, and seen again; but now, saith he, you see me no more, for by once dying, and by once appearing in the end of the world, I have put away sin by the sacrifice of myself.”* And this is farther evident, in that the great promise of the Holy Ghost was received by him, and the Spirit came down after his departure, as sent from the Father in his name. John 14: 26. Yea,

* Dr. Edward Reynolds, 110 Ps.

as sent by our ascended Saviour. If I depart, I will send him unto you. v. 7. And this brings me to the last particular under this head.

4. The Spirit of God convinceth men of the righteousness of Christ by his descent on the apostles ; by the miraculous gifts he bestowed on them, and the wonderful works he wrought by them.

God giveth not the Spirit by measure to his Son. John 3: 34. After his baptism the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. By the Spirit of God he cast out devils, Matt. 12: 28, and did other wonderful works. However there was an extraordinary dispensation of the Holy Ghost which was not given till Jesus was glorified ; and it is this which seems to be here especially intended as that which should give the highest evidence and strongest conviction concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and his righteousness. And here it may be observed, that though the Holy Spirit, being God, is in his nature invisible,

yet there were given sensible tokens of his presence in this wonderful descent. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2 : 2—4. And while many of different languages were amazed to hear the apostles speak the wonderful works of God in their own tongues, and others mocked, the apostle Peter declared that this was the work of the Holy Ghost given by our ascended Saviour. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. v. 33. Thus they received power from on high to publish the gospel to nations whose languages they knew not, till they were thus miraculously taught of God by his Spirit. And no doubt, with extraordinary gifts, there was

also given to the apostles by the same Spirit, a great increase of spiritual knowledge and faith, zeal and courage, humility and patience, love to God and man, and other graces, to carry them well through their services and sufferings for the name of Jesus. Our Saviour promised his disciples, that he would give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay, or resist, Luke 21: 15; and required them not to be anxiously concerned how or what they should speak when brought before governors and kings for his sake; for, says our Lord, It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which is in you. Matt. 10: 20. Accordingly, when Peter and John had wrought a wonderful miracle in restoring a man, lame from his mother's womb, and Peter filled with the Holy Ghost, had declared that it was by the name of Jesus that the man stood before them whole, and then that there was no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, it is observed, Acts 4: 13, Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and

perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. Yea, these enemies of Christ were convicted by their own consciences that a notable miracle had been done. v. 16. And no less wonderful was the success of their ministry, while the apostles went about thus miraculously furnished, and preached a crucified Saviour. Behold a number of poor fishermen subduing the people of every tongue and language where they came; I say, subduing them to the obedience of faith! What prejudices of education were overcome! What violent lusts and passions conquered! How did great numbers forsake all, yea life itself, that they might win Christ, and enjoy the blessedness of the invisible world where he is! Such was the wonderful success of the gospel when preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Accordingly, the apostle Paul observeth, That God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to con-

found the mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are. 1 Cor. 1: 27, 28. Here those words may be well applied, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4: 6. Now surely the Spirit of truth and holiness would never have wrought such works of grace by the preaching of the name of Jesus, had not he been Christ the righteous. 1 Tim. 3: 16. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.

IV. I would offer some brief description of this work of the Spirit, in convincing men of righteousness.

Now in this work the Spirit of God doth not only give external evidence in the revelation of God's word ; but also applieth himself inwardly to the heart, and opens the understanding to discern these spiritual things concerning Christ and his righteousness, after a spiritual manner. So that such as are thus favored, see the Son, and believe on him as the true Messiah and only Saviour, with that

faith which is the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11: 1. The Spirit of God enlightens the minds of his people with the saving knowledge of Christ and his righteousness. Agreeably the apostle John declareth, 1 John 2: 20, Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things, i. e., all things concerning Christ and the Christian religion necessary to salvation. The Spirit of God may be compared to oil, as this was used for light, and in medicine. The Spirit heals the visive faculty of the soul, and removeth spiritual blindness. He reneweth his people in knowledge, Col. 3: 10. Therefore when our Lord had declared to the Laodiceans that they were blind, he counsels them to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they might see. Rev. 3: 18. And when this work is wrought by the illumination of the Spirit, the gospel revelation concerning Christ and his righteousness appeareth in a new light. The Sun of righteousness ariseth upon the convinced sinner, with healing in his wings, "or in his beams." The doctrine of God our Saviour appeareth in its reality, importance and excellency.

And accordingly,

1. The work of the Spirit, in this conviction, is a saving work.

Indeed there may be some persuasion of these things from education, there may be a notional knowledge and historical faith ; yea, we may have the common illumination of the Spirit, and receive the revelations of the gospel with a transient joy ; and yet not see the glorious beauty and divine glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of him. But when the Spirit convinceth men of righteousness, in the sense in which I now consider the words, there is a renovation of the soul in all its powers by vital principles and habits of grace infused ; so that men are called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. However, I do not suppose by this, that in passive conversion the Spirit of God first giveth the light of this saving conviction of Christ, and then this light worketh an habitual change in the will and affections. No, I humbly conceive that in passive conversion there is the habitual change of all the faculties of the

soul wrought at once, by the divine operation of the Holy Spirit ; and then the understanding, now savingly enlightened, beholds Jesus Christ, in order of nature, before the will and affections are drawn to close with him and cleave unto him ; yea, so as to incline them to act agreeably to the discovery made of this glorious object. This is then a saving work of the Spirit of God. When Peter therefore had made that confession of his faith, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, our Lord pronounced him happy : Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Matt. 16: 16, 17. Thus to know Christ is the beginning of eternal life. John 17: 3.

2. In this work the Spirit of God giveth the convinced sinner satisfying evidence of Christ's ability and readiness to justify and save all that come to God by him.

He convinceth them that how many and great soever their sins have been, yet in Christ they may have a righteousness every way sufficient for their justification before

God, and to give them a sure title to eternal life, according to the new and everlasting covenant. While men entertain slight thoughts of the evil of sin, and of the punishment due to them for it, they may also entertain low, unworthy apprehensions of Christ, and yet nourish a carnal confidence that he is both able and ready to save them ; but when men are convinced of the heinous evil of sin as it is an offence against the infinitely glorious God, and so deserveth eternal punishment, now they may be ready to say, Can this man save us ? Who is able to deliver us ? Surely none but Almighty God can redeem us. Unless the arm of the Lord be revealed, all our hope of deliverance is perished. But now, in this article of extremity, the Spirit of God revealeth Christ as Jehovah our righteousness, as the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death ; and then the convinced sinner is able to say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. Now he seeth that he who is God hath purchased the church with his own blood, and given his life a ransom for many. And this maketh it manifest that God ay be just and

yet justify the sinner that believeth in Jesus; yea, that through faith in his blood God declareth his righteousness for the remission of sins. Rom. 3: 25. And we have the virtue of the blood of Christ further declared by a comparison from the legal sacrifices. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Heb. 9: 13, 14. If we understand the eternal Spirit here, of the godhead of our Lord, this gave the highest virtue and value to his offering. And then the Holy Ghost sanctified the man Christ Jesus in an extraordinary manner to this great work, and strengthened him to the most perfect exercise of grace in the discharge of it. Accordingly such as are convinced of righteousness, behold a fountain of merit and grace opened in Christ to wash away their sins. They see that this divine person is worthy to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,

in virtue of his obedience unto death, that all the glorious ends of his mediation may be accomplished. Yea, the Spirit of God showeth these things in such an agreeable as well as convincing light, that the enlightened mind is satisfied in this way of obtaining the justification of life. This light is sweet to the soul, and the believer determineth with the apostle to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. See 1 Cor. 2: 2. And then the Spirit of God convinceth men of Christ's readiness to save all that go to God by him. And now, they receive the calls of the gospel, not as the word of men, but of God, though men may be the instruments. Now they know Christ's voice when he says, Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. John 6: 37. They are convinced that they have a divine warrant to bear them out in this important act of trusting in Christ for righteousness, and a divine promise of eternal life, upon their obeying the gospel call.

Which leads me to say,

3. Thus the Spirit of God maketh men freely willing to receive and submit to Christ upon the call and offer of the gospel.

Now the call is effectual. God's people are willing in the day of his power. They have the great truths of the gospel concerning Christ and his righteousness demonstrated, and their objections drawn from their own great sinfulness, answered. And thus our Saviour taketh possession of the hearts of men, not by violence, but by a sweet, and yet powerful divine influence whereby they are persuaded to embrace him as the Lord their righteousness. Being thus drawn by the Spirit, they freely go out to Christ renouncing their own righteousness as filthy rags, and putting on this best robe of Christ's righteousness as every way sufficient to cover their nakedness. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me. John 6: 45. The enlightened mind beholds our Lord Jesus as a most suitable and sufficient

Saviour, the renewed will makes choice of him, and the uniting affections cleave to him.

A P P L I C A T I O N .

Use 1. From what hath been said, we may learn the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Old and New Testament agree in bearing witness to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the great God our Saviour. And when our Lord ascended on high, he received of the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost, and sent him to convince men of their great sin in rejecting him by unbelief, and then to show them the perfect righteousness which he had wrought out for the justification of sinners before God, which must be the righteousness of one who is God-man ; for had he been a mere creature though the most excellent, his obedience had been due to God by the law of creation, and it would have been impossible for him to purchase eternal salvation for us. But the word of God declareth, that being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God ;

but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2: 6—8. And this being the case, his obedience is strictly and properly meritorious ; yea there, is infinite merit in it to purchase eternal redemption for us. And this is one of the deep things of God revealed in the gospel, and by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, and declared to be the Son of God, the Lord our righteousness, by wonderful operations of this divine Spirit sent in his name after his ascension into heaven. Let us then obey that command of God, He is thy Lord, and worship thou him. Ps. 45: 11. And let us join the heavenly host, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Rev. 5: 12.

Use 2. Learn the heinous sin and most dangerous evil of rejecting Jesus Christ, and

neglecting his great salvation under the gospel revelation.

We have the strongest evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the only Saviour, in the word of God. The doctrines therein delivered concerning Christ, the history of wonderful miracles and works of grace wrought by the Spirit in the name of Jesus, put this beyond all reasonable doubt. How great then is the evil of rejecting Christ ! Surely such as put the gospel from them, judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will. Heb. 2 : 3, 4. And still the sin and danger of this is greater, when we have had the Spirit of God striving with us. When this is done against the light and conviction of our consciences, it is highly provoking unto God ; and when there is added over and above a malicious opposi-

tion to the Holy Ghost in his divine operations ; this seems to contain in it the malignity of that sin which is unto death, and shall not be forgiven. When our Lord therefore had cast out a devil by the Spirit of God, and the Pharisees blasphemed, saying, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils, he declareth to them, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Matt. 12: 31. And we have that awful word for our warning, It is impossible for them who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance : seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Heb. 6: 4—6. This falling away seems to refer to a total and wilful apostacy joined with a malicious opposition to the Christian religion after we have been convinced that it is of God, and have made a profession of it. And therefore,

Peter's fall in denying his Lord, and other heinous transgressions of God's children, do not come under this head. How dreadful then must be the condition of such apostates ! How aggravated their sin and punishment ! Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace. Heb. 10: 29. O let us then take heed and beware of all approaches towards this great sin ! Let us not indulge an evil heart of unbelief, nor resist the Spirit of God striving with us. But let not any that are seeking the Lord with trembling, imagine that this is their case, and so discourage themselves, as if there was no hope for them : but rather,

Use 3. Let such as are sensible of their sin and guilt, cry to God for his Spirit to give them the saving knowledge of Christ, and his righteousness, and to enable them to receive him as their only Saviour.

Hath the Spirit of God convinced you of

your lost and perishing condition ? Pray to the Father then to open your eyes to behold his Son, who is come to seek and save that which was lost : he who is mighty to save inviteth you to come unto him, and promiseth he will in no wise cast out them that come unto him. Do not say then, that your hope is lost, and that you are utterly cut off ; but rather resolve that you will look and wait for God's salvation. Do not attempt to patch up a righteousness of your own ; but cast away your filthy rags, and go out unto Christ for white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness may not appear. Seek of God that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, whereby they stand and are accepted as righteous before God, even the righteousness of Christ imputed and received by faith. Put on Christ, and the holy God, looking on you as united to him by a true and living faith, will behold no iniquity in you so as to enter into judgment, and condemn you for it. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ; who walk not after the

flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8: 1. Go to Christ then, and say, Lord, I am guilty, I cannot conceal it. My own heart condemneth me, and thou art greater than my heart, and knowest all things. But now I humbly and thankfully accept thine offer to be my surety and advocate with the Father. I put my cause into thine hand. O plead it, and answer for me ! Let the hand-writing which is against me be found cancelled in virtue of thy precious blood, and let me be found justified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Lord, I believe that there is virtue enough in thy precious blood to wash away all my sins, though they have been as scarlet, and red like crimson ; help thou mine unbelief ! Thus do by God's grace, and you may have confidence towards God now, and shall not be ashamed before him at his coming. No, if you appear clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, you shall be openly acquitted in the day of judgment. But then remember that to whom Christ is made of God righteousness, he is also made sanctification ; and look to it that your faith be that living faith which

purifieth the heart, and worketh by love. For that faith which hath not works is dead, being alone : James 2: 17 ; and will leave you in a state of death, and damnation. That faith by which God's children depend entirely upon the meritorious righteousness of Christ for justification before God, is also a vital principle of new obedience. Look unto Jesus then, not only as to the Lord your righteousness ; but also as to your head of influence, of whose fullness his people receive and grace for grace. When you go forth to meet the bridegroom, look to it that you have the oil of saving grace in your hearts. Thus stand with your lights burning, like unto men that wait for their Lord ; so shall you be found of your Judge in peace, without spot, and blameless.

LECTURE IV.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVINCETH OF JUDGMENT.

JOHN 16: 8.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and
of righteousness, and of judgment.

DOCTRINE I.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, to convince and reprove men of sin.

DOCTRINE II.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, to convince men of righteousness.

I have considered these two doctrines, and shall now speak briefly to the third and last.

* Preached at the Old South Meeting-House, in Boston,
Lord's Day, April 26, 1741.

DOCTRINE III.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, to convince men of judgment.

Under this doctrine we may consider,

I. What are we to understand by judgment.

II. The means which the Spirit useth to convince men of this judgment.

III. I shall give some brief description of this work of the Spirit in convincing men of judgment.

I. What are we to understand by judgment.

Ans. 1. We may understand it of that unjust judgment which men passed on Jesus Christ, as if he suffered for his own crimes, and his disciples ought to suffer for confessing his name before men.

We read of Jesus, that in his humiliation, his judgment was taken away. Acts 8:33. Though Pilate declared, having examined him before his accusers, that he found no fault in him touching those things

whereof they accused him, yet the voices of the multitude, and of the high priests prevailed; so that Pilate gave sentence it should be as they requested. Luke 23: 34. Many were ignorant of the gospel revelation concerning Jesus Christ. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 1 Cor. 2: 8. And the Christian religion is mentioned as a sect or heresy every where spoken against. Acts 28: 22. Thus was the holy Jesus set for a sign which should be spoken against. Luke 2: 34. But when the Spirit of God came to discharge his office as an advocate in behalf of our ascended Saviour, he convinced many of the great wrong they had done in this matter, and rebuked them sharply; so that they were brought to judge and condemn themselves. Thus after our Lord had appeared to Saul, saying by a voice from heaven, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, and the Spirit of God had wrought a thorough change in him, he freely acknowledged that he had been a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. 1 Tim. 1: 13.

2. By judgment we may understand the power given to our Lord Jesus Christ to govern the world, and to execute judgment upon Satan, that grand usurper, and all that adhere to him, in opposition to the kingdom of God. Agreeably, it is said, v. 11, Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. After our Lord's resurrection he said to his disciples, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Matt. 28: 18. When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and broke the power of the enemies of our salvation ; so that they shall not be able to destroy so much as one of those little ones who put their trust in him. Here then it may be proper to observe, that the apostate spirits who left their first habitation are represented in Scripture as united under one head against Christ and his kingdom. The devil, that old serpent, beguiled Eve, and prevailed upon her to eat of the forbidden fruit, and then by her enticed her husband. We read, She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, with her, and he did eat. Gen. 3: 6. And

thus were our first parents drawn into a rebellion against the Lord their maker and great benefactor, which must have been destructive to them and their sinful progeny, had not God sent his Son to destroy the works of the devil. The first promise of this was given to Adam and Eve before they were cast out of the earthly paradise. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen. 3 : 15. Here is a sentence of condemnation denounced against the devil, and in the same words a precious promise of deliverance made to God's people. "This seed is the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who was to be born of a woman being a virgin, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, to dispossess the devil, through the merit of his death, and the power of his Spirit, of all his force."* Accordingly, when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.

* Dutch Annotations.

Gal. 4 : 4, 5. And as our Lord was sent to save the lost sons and daughters of Adam, so to confound the accursed plots and devices of Satan, whereby he sought to ensnare and ruin them for ever. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Heb. 2 : 14. Satan, by the divine permission, has the power of death as an executioner. He is a murderer, and destroyer. But now, the Son of God, having taken on him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, he died on the cross that he might condemn sin in the flesh, which is the sting of death, bear the curse of that law which is the strength of sin; and so purchase reconciliation with God for his people, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, to turn sinners from the power of Satan unto God. And thus Satan's kingdom, which is founded on sin, falls to the ground, and his destroying power over man is taken away. And therefore when the time of our Lord's death drew

nigh, he said, Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. John 12: 31. That is, "My death will be the devil's overthrow ; will bring down sin, and deliver the world from the tyranny and dominion of Satan."* Our mighty Redeemer spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them on the cross. Col. 2: 15. He has purchased a glorious victory over Satan, and all our spiritual enemies, sin, this present evil world as under the power of the devil and death. Agreeably, our Lord said to his disciples, In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. John 16: 33. We read, I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death ; O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction. Hos. 13: 14. And then the word of God declareth, that our Lord must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. Ps. 110: 1. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy

* Mr. Burkitt.

footstool. And now the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son. He is the judge, lawgiver, and king of his people; and as the Lord strong and mighty will he go on conquering and to conquer his and his people's enemies, till they shall all be put under him; and his people also shall have dominion over them, in the great day of judgment.

Which leads me to say,

3. We may understand it of the last and general judgment, when our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear in the glory of his Father, to judge the world in righteousness.

We read, He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts 17: 31. While our Lord was upon earth, he spake of this judgment. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations. Matt. 25:

31, 32. And now he is risen and ascended, the heaven must contain him until the time of restitution of all things, when there shall be an end put to the disorder and confusion brought into the world by sin, and all shall be obliged to say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous ; verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth. And we have an earnest of this in our Lord's power to cast out Satan, and in the wonderful reformation wrought, when after his ascension, he sent the rod of his strength out of Zion, his word accompanied with his Spirit, and so ruled in the midst of his enemies. See Ps. 110. But we do not as yet see all things put under him, as they shall be in the great day. Satan is still obeyed as the god of this world, and works in the hearts of the children of disobedience. Antichrist's reign has not a period put unto it ; and to this day, the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. So that even in the last days, there are scoffers who say in derision, Where is the promise of his coming ? But God by his word and Spirit says to us, Behold, the

Lord cometh! Jude vs. 14, 15. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. And in that great and terrible day of the Lord, the devil must be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented for ever and ever. This the devils believe and tremble. And then shall wicked men have that dreadful sentence pronounced and executed upon them, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt. 25: 41. Sinners have sometimes such a conviction of this judgment as makes them also tremble. As Paul reasoned of judgment to come, Felix trembled. Acts 24: 25. And then shall the saints have their judgment brought forth as the light, and their righteousness as the noon-day, when the king shall say unto them on his right hand, Come ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matt. 25: 34. God's people shall have a complete victory over Satan, this present evil world, and the last enemy, death. And all the fruits of sin and the curse respecting them shall be fully taken away, when Christ shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation. And the Spirit of God now giveth them such a conviction of this judgment, that they look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

II. I would consider some of the means which the Holy Spirit useth to convince men of judgment.

1. The Spirit of God convinceth men of judgment by the miraculous power given to the apostles to cast out devils in the name of Jesus.

While our Lord was on earth, he exercised this power. He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. Acts 10: 38. He cast down Satan, and healed many that were under a bodily pos-

session. Thus our Lord cast many devils out of a miserable man in the country of the Gadarenes. Luke 8:30. Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said Legion; because many devils were entered into him. But at Christ's command they were dispossessed. v. 33. Then went the devils out of the man. And when the seventy returned, they said, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name. Upon which our Lord says, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Luke 10:18. And after our Saviour Christ was exalted, this power was wonderfully manifested by the hands of the apostles in the name of Jesus. They brought them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one. Acts 5:16. Paul said to the evil spirit that had possessed a person as a spirit of divination, I command thee in the name of Jesus to come out of her; and he came out the same hour. Acts 16:18. Now the great agent in this miraculous work was the Spirit of God. Matt. 12:28. And by it he con-

vinces men of the dominion of our Lord Jesus over the powers of darkness.

2. The Spirit of God convinceth men of judgment by the light of the glorious gospel, and the works of grace wrought by it.

The evil spirits are called the rulers of the darkness of this world. Eph. 6: 12. Satan's kingdom is founded on the darkness of sin, and supported by ignorance and error. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit useth the light of his word to subdue him. Thus our Lord said to Paul, I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Acts 26: 16—18. Now it is the Spirit of God who furnisheth and sends forth these ministers of Christ to show men the miserable bondage they are under to Satan, and to invite them

to come over to Christ, whom God hath set for an ensign of the people. Isa. 11 : 10. Our Lord while on earth was anointed by the Spirit to preach deliverance to the captives. And after his ascension he sent forth his apostles, and others to publish the glad tidings of the gospel. And by his word accompanied with his Spirit, he broke in pieces the power of the enemy. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. The instruments indeed were the weak things of the world, that the glory of the victory might be given to Christ. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 2 Cor. 4 : 7. Some suppose that here is an illusion to Gideon's little army that marched against the mighty host of Midian, with trumpets, lamps and pitchers ; they blew the trumpets, brake the pitchers, and held up the lamps, crying,

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. And the God of armies routed their formidable enemies. Judges 7. Thus Christ's ministers who are as their brethren, formed out of the clay, hold up the light of the gospel, and cry aloud as they are directed; and when the almighty Spirit is pleased to work with and by them, the powers of darkness flee before them, as the shades of night are chased away before the springing day, and rising sun. Thus was Satan cast out of the Gentile world. His oracles were struck dumb, his temples and altars were deserted, and many turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. We read that many who used curious arts, "the study of magic and divination," burned their books, when the word of God prevailed; though the price of them was counted, and found to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts 19: 19, 26. And by the way, when the word of God prevaleth among you, the Spirit will convince you of the evil of reading romances, plays and other lewd books. To return, when Satan was cast out

of Rome-Pagan, he gave his power to the beast, to Antichrist ; and so set himself again in opposition to Christ and his kingdom. But our Lord has in a good measure consumed him with the spirit of his mouth, the sword of the Spirit going out of his mouth, in his preached gospel. The apostle John saw in vision an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth. Rev. 14: 6. By which we may understand “the faithful witnesses of Christ and teachers of the gospel” who publish the pure doctrines of God’s word in opposition to the errors and heresies of Rome, the angels of the churches, and messengers of Christ. And after this, another angel crieth, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, v. 8. Thus doth the Spirit of God by his word plead the cause of Christ against his enemies, and convince the obstinate to their confusion, that our Lord is above them, even in those things wherein they deal most proudly. And thus doth he give his people an evident demonstration of the authority of Christ to execute judgment against the great enemy of

their souls. Now it appears that Christ is stronger than the strong one, while the devil is thus cast down from his usurped throne in the hearts of men. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. Luke 11: 21, 22. The words may be fitly applied to the destruction of Satan's power both respecting the bodies and souls of men.

3. The Spirit of God convinceth men of this judgment by judicial dispensations of providence.

God is known by the judgments which he executeth. And it hath pleased the Father to commit this judgment to the Son, the power of punishing his and his people's implacable enemies, and of correcting his covenant people. The apostle Paul says, respecting God's own people, When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 1 Cor. 11 : 32. Now by these providential

dispensations the Spirit of God pleads the cause of Christ, as the judge of the world, and as the lord and lawgiver of his church ; and convinceth men of the necessity of submitting to his golden sceptre, lest they be broken to pieces with his iron rod. When judgment begins at the house of God, there is a loud call to the wicked to consider, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God. Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? See 1 Pet. 4 : 17, 18. And thus are sinners sometimes brought to make supplication to their judge, sensible that it must be a fearful thing to fall into his hand as an avenger of sin. And when the children of God behold how the Lord puts away the wicked like dross, they cry out with the Psalmist, My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments. Now they are quickened to serve the Lord with reverence, and concerned to make it evident to themselves that they are not of those who must be led forth with the workers of iniquity in the great day of judgment.

III. I proceed in the last place to give some brief description of this work of the Spirit in convincing men of judgment.

The Holy Spirit, the divine author of this work, is called the Spirit of judgment. Isa. 4 : 4. And he may be so called in part as he convinceth of judgment. And in this work the Holy Spirit brings home the evidence of this judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ by an inward application to the heart and conscience, in legal or saving conviction.

1. In this work the Spirit of God showeth the sinner that while he refuseth to submit to Christ as his Lord and Redeemer, he is under the power of Satan who is leading him captive to hell.

The devil is called the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Eph. 2: 2. He is here described as one having others under him, the prince of devils, as having been, we may suppose, the arch-traitor and leader of rebellion to the apostate spirits. His power is confined to this lower world, and is exercised over such as continue in disobedience towards

their rightful Lord. He may tempt God's children ; but he reigns only in the hearts of rebellious sinners. These he leads captive at his will. But alas ! they are very insensible of it. The most do not know, will not consider, that this old serpent seeks to beguile and cheat them of their precious souls by his temptations from the pleasures, riches and honors of this world ; and that while he gratifieth the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, he holds them fast by these vile lusts, as in chains of darkness. But when the Holy Spirit cometh on men to deliver them from the destroying power of this unclean spirit, he opens their eyes, and sheweth them this evil one in his own colors. And now they are made sensible that as a roaring lion, he seeks to devour them ; and that none can deliver them but the Lord Jesus, who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Now they feel that this fiery serpent hath injected his deadly poison into their souls, and that with the stung Israelites they must perish, unless they look to the Son of God, who was lifted up on the cross.

Which leads me to say,

2. The Holy Spirit revealeth Jesus Christ to sinners as their only and almighty Redeemer. The Spirit of God convinceth them of the truth of that word, Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same : that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. Heb. 2: 14, 15. And that Christ is able to bring forth judgment to victory, by rescuing miserable sinners, and so taking the prey out of the hand of the mighty.

3. The Spirit of God enableth his people to submit to Christ as their prince and Saviour, renouncing the devil and all his works. They can say, Though this cruel lord has had the dominion over us, yet now will we make mention of the name of Christ, as our only rightful Lord and Master. And they are willing that those lusts whereby Satan held them, should all be slain before the Lord ; because these also are enemies to

Christ. Thus they go over to Christ, to list under his banner, whom God hath given to be a leader and commander to the people, to bring many sons to glory, as the captain of their salvation. They are willing in the day of God's power. Ps. 110: 3. In this respect, they are not as pressed men; but as volunteers, freely offer themselves, and so come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. By the evidence of the Spirit they discern clearly that the service of Satan is vile slavery, and the wages death; and accordingly they desert him with a holy indignation, and a desire of taking a holy revenge of him. They also see that the service of Christ is glorious liberty, and the gracious reward, eternal life; and accordingly they willingly subscribe their hand to the Lord, and enter into an oath that they will be for him and no other. And thus are they delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Col. 1: 13. Satan is cast down, and cast out of their hearts; so that though he may tempt, he shall never again usurp dominion

over them. The Son of God in opposition to this usurper, cometh into their souls, and taketh possession of them as his own. And they are enabled to open the everlasting doors of their hearts, that the King of glory may come in. They say to the Son and Lord of David, something as Amasa to king David, when the Spirit came upon him, Thine are we, David, and on thy side ; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers ; for thy God helpeth thee. Nor doth the noise of war discourage them ; for now the Spirit gives them a view of Christ as the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. They realize that there can be no true safety, no victory, no triumph, but in abiding loyal to Christ, and standing firm on his side.

4. The Spirit of God convinceth his people of this judgment, by bruising Satan under their feet more and more, and by giving them the lively hope of a complete victory over him, and all their enemies, at the day of judgment.

God's people under this conviction of the Spirit, behold Satan as a conquered enemy, and believe that God will fulfil his word by

bruising him under their feet. And they happily find that he that has begun the good work is carrying it on towards perfection against all opposition from their spiritual enemies. The Spirit of God inspirereth them with courage and skill to resist the devil steadfastly. He teacheth them to fight the battles of our Lord, looking to Jesus Christ, that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He enableth them to use their spiritual weapons with dexterity and success. He enableth them to put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ; to take the shield of faith, wherewith they quench the fiery darts of the wicked ; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The Spirit of God also is in his people a spirit of supplication, helping their infirmities, and exciting them to cry to the Lord for grace and strength to help them, while they are wrestling against the rulers of the darkness of this world. And thus do they receive fresh supplies and succors from the Lord, in their times of need. Agreeably, the apostle Paul

declareth, that God's people are more than conquerors, through him that loved them. For I am persuaded, says he, that neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And the same apostle gives thanks to God, who always caused them to triumph in Christ. 2 Cor. 2:14. Our Jesus, our Joshua, even now causeth his people to put their feet upon the necks of their spiritual enemies, and giveth them the assurance of a complete victory and triumph, when they shall sit on thrones, judging the world. 1 Cor. 6: 2, 3. Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? "They may first be acquitted," says an expositor on the place, "and then advanced to the bench, to approve and applaud the righteous judgment of Christ, both on men and angels."

APPLICATION.

Use 1. Doth the Spirit of God convince men of their unjust judgment concerning

Christ? Let us then ask the Spirit to give us a right and sound judgment concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, his person, offices and works.

Since the fall, men are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. Eph. 4: 18. And in a particular manner, they are prone to entertain strong prejudices against Christ, and the way of salvation by him. And Satan, if God permit, will be active in tempting them to entertain false opinions concerning the only Saviour, that if possible he may hinder them from believing in him to the salvation of their souls. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2 Cor. 4: 4. O let us then beseech the Lord to grant us the light and influence of his good Spirit, that we may have right apprehensions of the Son of God, and not have our minds corrupted with any false doctrines relating to the union of his divine and human

nature in one person, or the great end of his death, or his ability and readiness to save even the chief of sinners. Lest that should come upon us which is spoken of in the prophets, and was fulfilled in many of God's ancient people, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish ; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Use 2. Let what has been said awaken secure sinners, who are going on in acts of rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ.

How great is your sin and danger, while you stand in opposition to the Lord Jesus, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment ! What is this, but to set briars and thorns against consuming fire ? And who is it you are confederate with, in this accursed rebellion ? With Satan, the sworn enemy of God and man ; who is also a conquered enemy, reserved in everlasting chains of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. O awake then, and cry for mercy ! Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him, and before he shall enter into

judgment with you. He will overcome when he judgeth. There lieth no appeal from his sentence, nor can any deliver out of his hand. Now then, while he is seated on a throne of grace, make peace with him, and accept of pardon upon gospel terms; lest you have judgment without mercy in the terrible day of the Lord, and with amazement say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Rev. 6: 16, 17. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

Use 3. Learn that the faithful people of God have strong encouragement and consolation in Christ Jesus, under all the trials and temptations of this life.

You are engaged in a warfare with powerful enemies, sin, Satan, and this present evil world; and if you look no higher than yourselves, you may be ready to say, I shall one

day fall by the hands of these enemies. But then, if you look to Jesus, the captain of your salvation, you may encourage yourselves with those words, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they be that be with them.

2 Kings 6: 16. The Son of God, in our nature, hath encountered and overcome the tempter; and it is declared of him, A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. Matt. 12: 20. He himself hath suffered being tempted, and therefore is able to succor you under your temptations. O child of God ! be not discouraged, either at the number, or power and policy of your spiritual enemies. Stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. Be strong in the Lord then, and in the power of his might. Go forth against these enemies in the name of the Lord ; through him shall you do valiantly, and tread them under that rise up against you. Let this then animate you to fight the good fight of faith, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. His arm, and the light of his countenance

will give you the victory. And let God's people, under the present dark aspects of divine Providence, behold all judgment committed to the Son, and realize it that he governs all affairs even those which appear most intricate and perplexed, with unerring wisdom, irresistible power, and with a tender concern for the salvation of his people; so that in the end, Zion shall arise and shine, with the glory of the Lord risen upon her; and her enemies shall lick the dust. Trust in the Lord therefore at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before him. And hear that word, Ps. 27: 14, Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.

Use 4. Let such as are under a preparatory work of conviction, look unto Jesus to bruise Satan under their feet.

Be not dismayed if you should find a violent struggle, when our Lord is coming by his Spirit to deliver you from the destroying power of Satan. But encourage yourselves to seek the Lord more earnestly that he would rebuke the tempter, and not suffer you

to be tempted above what you are able to bear. Do not listen to the suggestions of this evil one ; but look to Jesus to execute judgment upon him. If he tempt you to hurt your bodies, hearken to that word, Do thyself no harm. Or if he should tempt you to destroy your souls by presumption or despair, reject his evil motions with abhorrence, and labor to cherish the motions of the good Spirit of God in opposition to him. Be not afraid to worship God in secret, lest he should appear to you ; but consider, our Saviour holds him as in a chain, and can control him at his pleasure. Say to the Lord, Rule thou over us, and let this usurper be cast out of our hearts. And pray God to subdue every lust, that there may be none retained whereby the devil shall keep possession of your souls.

Use 5 Let us all be exhorted to submit to Christ as our rightful Lord, and to stand on his side against the devil and his angels.

There are two kingdoms which divide the whole world, the kingdom of God's dear Son, and the kingdom of darkness. And we must

belong to the one, or the other. Here none may presume that they can stand neuter. If you refuse to stand on Christ's side, you must expect to be treated as enemies to him. Here then, I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. If you continue under the power of Satan, you must finally perish with him in hell. But if you now submit to Christ, you shall obtain the blessings of the kingdom of grace, and in due time be advanced to the kingdom of glory, where there is neither adversary, nor evil occurrent. Be persuaded then to stand on this side, and you will have the best cause, the best leader, and certain victory in God's time ; the reward of which is not a fading laurel, but a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

And here give me leave to direct the exhortation,

To children. Submit to Christ, and list under his banner. Dear children, your tender years need not discourage you from engaging in this war ; for our Lord ordains strength out of the mouth of babes, that he may still the enemy and the avenger. The power and

grace of our Saviour are magnified, while he perfecteth praise out of your mouths, and makes you victorious over the sinful follies and vanities of childhood.

To young men. Do you also submit to Christ, and list under his banner. Obey that word, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 2: 1. Flee youthful lusts which war against the soul; and while you strive for the mastery, be temperate in all things. When Satan tempts you to walk in the ways of your heart, and after the sight of your eyes, realize that for these things God will bring you into judgment, and then say, How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God? How shall I be able to lift up my head, when I must appear before the judgment seat of Christ? Thus resist the devil, and he shall flee from you. O, how lovely a sight is it, to behold our youth denying the solicitations of Satan, when he urgeth them to gratify their carnal appetites, in this age of pleasure! I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write

unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 1 John 2: 14.

Again, Let the weaker sex willingly offer themselves among the people, and engage in this holy war. Arise with Deborah, a mother in Israel, go forth against the enemy, and you shall have occasion to sing with her, O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. You need not fear, having such a leader to go before you. And for your further encouragement, I may observe to you, that in the holy army of martyrs who overcame by the blood of the Lamb, we have some heroic examples of courage and firmness of mind even among women, and that when called to resist unto blood, striving against sin.

Let our aged go forth against the enemy, and fight the Lord's battles. There is no discharge in this war. No, you must be faithful to death. And if any, we may well expect that old disciples, who have for a long time followed Christ, should resist the devil with holy courage and skill, as not being ignorant of his devices. A few contests more,

and you shall be able to say with Paul the aged, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day. 2 Tim. 4 : 7, 8.

[A single paragraph, addressed to the Indians and negroes in the author's congregation, is here omitted.]

Let parents, and masters of families, submit to Christ, and train up their children and all under their care for his service. And

Let the pastors of the churches be exhorted to lead forth their flocks in opposition to the powers of darkness, and do your utmost by purity of doctrine, by the exercise of an holy discipline, and by your good conversation, that Satan's kingdom may fall, and Christ's kingdom may be more and more set up upon the ruins of it.

In a word and to conclude: In this remarkable season, let us be earnest with God for the more plentiful effusions of his Spirit, that there may stand up an exceeding great army to fight the battles of the Lord, and take the

kingdom of heaven with an holy violence. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness. And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Let thine arrows be sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, and the people fall under thee. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies, and make thy people willing in the day of thy power. And let us avoid every thing that has a tendency to quench the Spirit, and so to hinder the success of the gospel. Let us remember that true godliness hath its influence on the whole conversation. And accordingly, let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then look well to the ways of our households, and take care that we, our children and servants, be well employed in the particular business to which God calls us. Let children be well governed. Let them duly attend the school, and be in subjection to their parents, and all over them in the Lord. Let every thing that is good in them be cherished and encouraged,

and at the same time prudent methods be used that the good be not evil spoken of, through their weakness and infirmity. And let us all watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. Let us try the spirits, and not give place to the devil, though he should be transformed into an angel of light. We may well expect that this malicious and subtle adversary will be busy at such a time as this ; and should accordingly be upon our guard, that we may not be caught in his snare. Let none be lifted up with pride, lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil. Do not say in vain boasting, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. Where God makes the difference, give him the glory ; and behave with great modesty and humility. Let not your zeal be furious and disorderly, censorious and uncharitable ; but according to knowledge, and a sound judgment. Be zealous therefore, and repent, remember the first love, and do the first works. Consider, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. And they that are Christ's

have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. Let the children of God quicken their pace in the way towards heaven, saying with the apostle, I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Phil. 3 : 13, 14. And let such as are under good impressions from the Spirit, take heed to themselves, and beware of apostasy. O, ponder those awful words, If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Heb. 10 : 38. But if there should come a falling away respecting some that have promised fair, let us not be shaken in mind as if the main work was not of God, nor take up an evil report against it. Scripture and experience warn us to fear and prepare for such a trial. But, O thou God of all grace, keep us from falling. Let thy work appear more and more to thy servants, and thy glory unto their children ; confirm, increase and perfect it to the praise of thy glorious grace.

And may our Lord utterly destroy Anti-christ by the brightness of his coming. May he bind Satan, and cast him into the bottomless pit. And may that voice be heard, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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